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THE
Tragedies of Sin
CONTEMPLATED,
IN

[Ruine of the ANGELS,
Fall of MAN,
The Destruction of the Old WORLD,
Confusion of BABEL,
Conflagration of SODOM, &c.

HUMBLY
Recommended to the present Age, for the
Designed Ends of *Caution and Terror.*

TOGETHER WITH
REMARKES

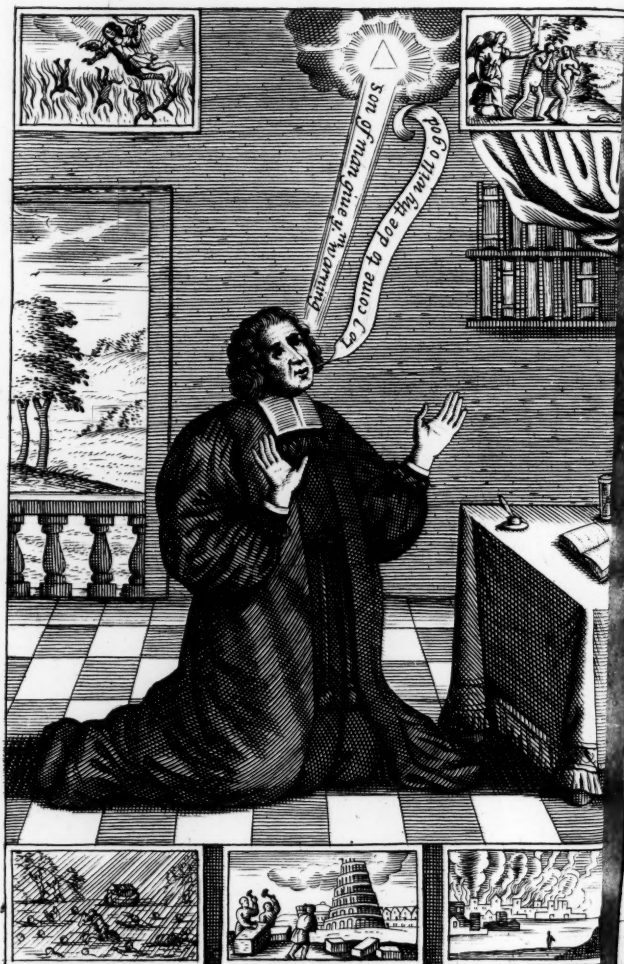
On the LIFE of the
Great **ABRAHAM.**

By **STEPH. JAY**, Rector of *Chinner* in the
County of **OXON.**

*Now all these things happened to them for Example; and they are
written for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the World
are come. 1 Cor. 10. 11.*

LONDON,
Printed by *J. Allwood* for **John Denton** at
the Black Raven in the *Poultry*, 1689.

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O Earth Earth Earth. Hear the Word of the Lo

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THE

Tragedies of Sin CONTEMPLATED,

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Recommended to the present Age, for the
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TOGETHER WITH

R E M A R Q U E S

On the LIFE of the

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By STEPH. FAT, Rector of Chinner in the
County of OXON.

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L O N D O N,

Printed by J. Astwood for John Dunton at
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TO THE
SACRED HANDS
OF THE
King and Queen's
Most Excellent MAJESTIES.

Dread Sovereigns,

IF *Angels* wrapt in Direfull Chains,
And *Princes* doom'd to servile Pains;
If a *Creation* lost in Waves,
And *Cities* sunk in Fiery Graves,
Be *Treasures* worth Your *Royal Eye*
To Glance upon, and cause to Dye,
Then Seal the Warrant, or Command
The *Tyrant* to Depart the Land:
For (*Sin's* Dominion feeble grown)
God will Confirm and Fix Your Own.

So Incessantly Prays,
Your MAJESTIES
Most Obedient Subject

and Servant,

A 2

Steph. Jay.

TO THE
SACRED HANDS

OF THE

King and Queen

IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED

That whereas

By an Act in that behalf made

And whereas

It is enacted

That the said

Be it enacted

That the said

That the said

For the better

God will

That the said

That the said

That the said

That the said

That the said

That the said



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TO THE READER.

I Am not insensible that 'tis every dayes fashion with the Wantonists of the Age, to make Court to New Papers, (as to Fresh Ladies) with fair and specious Pretensions of Love, but in truth very foul and dishonourable Projects of Lust, and only to crop from them (the Virgin Fruit) whatever is delicious and complacent in them : These have learned to Fornicate with Books too, and by a subtle Alchymy can Elixirate the whole Substance into a few drops, which themselves lasciviously swallow, while they are content to leave the Corps unto others.

Thus have I seen the many Admirers of those indeed very beautiful

* Pieces of Art, (so curiously drawn by the Divine Pencil of that Incomparable Author unknown) Kiss their fair Hands with so devout Adoration and Court-like Address, as one would have sworn them their most entire and ab-

* The Gentleman and Ladies Calling.

To the Reader.

solute Captives ; And which might have given their joyful Parent the most unquestionable Assurance in the prosperous Success of his pious Fraud, who by the soft Wreaths of his charming Eloquence had so Innocently plotted to Marry them to Happiness, and knit them (unmoveably) to their Saviour : When (alas !) after the Rape their Sacrilegious Fingers had once made on the Flowers of his Oratory, their Unnatural Heats (like those of Amnon) have soon cooled into the basest slights and disdain ; Nay, very Choller and Passion against the grave Overtures of any Contract with Heaven, the only justifiable Design of the Congress : Ah no, they have little Appetite to the Matrimony-Noose ; they nibble at the Golden Bait, and yet as politickly escape the Hook, can love Books (as Mistresses) for an Hour, but to go to Church with them is least in their Thoughts.

And 'tis evident, this Lascivioulness of the Fancy may Vie Prosperity with any the rankest Debaucheries of the Times ; Mens Brains growing as Wanton as their Blood ; and should the Infection scatter so successfully as hitherto, will shortly perk up, and with that Aiery Lady at Rome, from the Plea of Universality, call a Council, and Vote her self Honest and Authentick ; and then we shall wear the Feathers in our Heads,

as

To the Reader.

as already the other Levities of France on our Backs. There is this only Rescue of Hope left us, that that other Claim of Antiquity may probably fail her, and happily help to secure us : This being but a Modern Deity, a Goddess newly come up, and the Mushroom Product of the present Age, a Madness of but Yesterday : Our Fore-fathers being well enough satisfied to be Told into Heaven by the Plain-song of bare Declaration, when all the Notes of the Church Chantry are too dull to Chime us in thither.

But what is most deplorable, and for ever to be lamented (if possible) in Tears of Blood, is the dire Effect of this Luxury of the Ear ; for scattering its spurious Seed, it has generated the Cursed Issue of a monstrous Neglect and scornful Contempt of the Divine Revelations ; while our Gallants of both Sexes huff at and quarrel with the Style of the Scriptures (as some heretofore the Epistle of St. James) to be too Flat and insipid, too Homespun and Rustick, and hence they treat them accordingly with as little Respect as a Withered Wife, bolt them out of Doors, (and no wonder when Cassandra is gotten in) or lock them up out of sight, not (as the Spaniard) from Love or Jealousy, but these from Satiety and Loathing. The sacred Oracles (as some Noble-mens Servants) are

To the Reader.

left to Board-Wages, and allowed the freedom of shifting for themselves, while their Masters feast at a more Luscious Ordinary. Nay worse, they grow ashamed of them, and blush when but found in their Company. 'Tis matter for Apology, to be surprized in the guilt of passing a short Visit on them. They laugh at their Clownish Expression, and wonder not that Joseph's Mistress fail'd of her Amours, when she courted her Favourite in no better Language than Come Lye with me. Thus (alas!) the very Waters of Life to these squeamish Stomachs are grown brackish and disgustful, as those of Marah, they cannot sip them (as some not their Coffee) without Lace.

What the Romish Cabals have so long (by the joynt Combination of Cunning and Villany) been Plotting to effect, viz. The Clasp'ing up our Bibles; whose hopes failing, these in commiseration to the desperate Design, are more luckily contriving with more effectual Aids, and stand ready with the Free-Will Offering of these inestimable Jewels, (which they have torn off already from their Ears) to gratifie that Priest, who hath his Fires ready to cast them into, and out of which shall arise a God for them more perfectly Calfish than Aaron's. So near are we approaching thy Banks, O Tyber!

But

To the Reader.

But should a Check come from the Mount, and their Idol chance to be stamp'd into Powder, they have danc'd so long about it, that to continue the Frolick, they would as readily Drink its Confusion, and Spice their Boles with a Deity. But Heaven deliver us from such as have no more Veneration for a God, than to lodge him in their Guts and the Bogg-house.

And may England never tast the bitter Draught that so mortally grip'd the Bowels of Israel, from that Provocation which God could never be perswaded to forget: Yea, tho' Moses proffered to expiate it by the Blood of his Soul, (as some think) but could not be accepted. And tho' Justice brake its Fast but on Three Thousand of them, yet was it Thirsty still, and never satisfied 'till it had Glutted it self with the Blood of them all, when afterwards their Carcases fell, and lay in the Wilderness as Dung.

But of how much sorer Punishment suppose ye shall they be thought worthy, who tread under foot the Holy Testament of the Son of God, and counting the Blood of the Covenant but a mean and unholy thing, shall do this despite to the Spirit of Grace.

But (Blessed God!) pity the Blind, and Pardon the Blasphemy of those miserable Creatures, who tax Infinite and Incompre-
hensible

To the Reader.

hensible Wisdom of Weakness and Defect, in not cloathing the Imperial Ordinances in such proper Dress as should best set off their Beauty and Lustre ; and therefore run Whoring after the vain Ebullitions of humane Brains, in Slight of the Divinity and Glory that every where sparkles thro' the Sacred Leaves of these Heavenly Volumes, and which are so far from the least failure in the Majesty of their Meen, that 'tis That alone has smitten away their Eyes, and now they idly Prate against the Sun whose powerful Darts have struck them blind, and left them senseless. And surely the Voice of the Lord is powerful, the Voice of the Lord is full of Majesty : And the Thunder that rattleth from the God of Glory through the Air of but Three Chapters in Job, and but One or Two in Isaiah, hath sent away in a Fright the loudest Hyperbole's (as the Winds into their Caverns) to hide their Heads in shame and silence ; and who sees not that the whole Vatican of all Created Wit shuts up it self in Despair, and sneaks away perfectly baffled by them ?

But it pitieth me to hear of any Son of Levi furthering the Conspiracy, who is commanded to execute the Revenge, and to sheath the Sword of his fiercest Rage in the very Bowels of this Lust. 'Tis insufferable to bring the Trayterers into the very Pulpit, there

to

To the Reader.

to draw the Ark of God with Philistine Heifers ; yet there are, who (strongly infected with this Gnostick Humour) blow up the Bladder of this Hypochondriack Vanity with most strenuous Sides and Lungs ; but (to judge Charitably) in an enforced Conformity to the proud Humour of the Age, they Sing the Lord's Song in a strange Language, while by the too ravishing Notes of their quavering Throats they faintly languish away the whole strength of their Errand, and cause it all to dye into Air and Nothing, feeding their Auditors with a flash of Wind, and giving them Musick instead of Meat.

Though Nero was so Ambitious to be reputed the best Fidler in Rome, yet 'tis below the glory of a Prince to speak Romance. Laws are delivered in the gravest Expressions ; God spake these Words, and said, is Oratory enough to Preface the Divine Mandates, and enforce the World to obey them.

Who sees not how strangely Profaneness hath encroached upon us, since we have fancied the Men of this Generation so easie and good Natur'd, to be thus readily Complement-ed out of their very Right Hands, when yet we see them keep their Purses so close, and part from their Lusts and Money with the like Torment. Though the Galathians Eyes were once at Paul's Service, yet our People

To the Reader.

ple have Wit enough to keep theirs in their Heads.

Nay, 'tis observable too, how well it pleaseth some of these Gentlemen to meet their Ideas at Church; and he that with the finest hand can Anatomize their Lusts before them, shall be Prophet to them, while themselves (with the Monster that ript up his Mother) make a curious Inspection into the very Bowels of them, and repeat them again by endearing Contemplation. As that famous Usurer that so generously rewarded the Homilies that sunk his Extortions to the pit of Hell, out of hopes that while they frightened others into some Reformation, himself might continue them with the advantage of a better Trade.

The Spirit of the World which maintained so firm Possession in the Hearts of Ezekiel's Hearers, had more Wit than to be play'd out by the sweet Minstrelsey of his pleasant Layes; and sure we have less hope (whose Lyres are not strung by Heaven) that the Devil of Atheism that snugs so securely in the innermost lodges of Mens Souls, and with the Serpent twists himself about their whole Hearts, will be exorcis'd by the loudest Adjurations of any Son of Scæva, who shall idly call on the Name without the Spirit or Power of the Holy Jesus; and how far such
have

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have prospered in the attempt, I must leave to the discretion of too sad and sensible Experience. But still methinks it is pity the Fiend should so peaceably Nestle there, while the effectual Charms of ever powerful Naked Truth would work more successfully to unloose and unkennel him. Very Rams-Horns when blown by the Breath of Faith shall Rase the Foundations, which all the Engines of Nature must ever despair to shake or pull down.

Thus by an Ominous Chymistry we are Calcining all the very substance of our Religion into Dust and Fancy, and nothing less than a Miracle of Mercy can deliver us from the ill Effects of the same Humour in that Egyptian Dame, who in a tottering Pinnacle, (tight as her Brains and Body) driven with Purple Sails and Silver Oars, and attended with infinite Consorts of Musick, did thus lasciviously deliver her self up into the fatal Dalliances of the Roman Usurper, and God knows how little Ballast of Solidity is left to secure us, while we are whiffing away the Honour and Happiness of being once esteemed the most Sober and Excellent Nation in the World: When now the Massey Gold of our former Reputation and Virtue is beaten into Leaf, and (with the hopes of being better) is all taking flight into Air.

'Tis not from the abundance, but want of (that Holy Oyl that once perfumed Aaron's Beard)

To the Reader.

Beard) the true Unction, that would Consecrate even us into Kings and Priests unto God, (if we had it) that this Levity (like a Dangerous Defluxion) is passed down from our Heads upon the Skirts of our Garments.

A giddy Brain hath created in us a frothy Spirit, hung all within with Vanity, the very Soul wantonizing in her darkeſt Cells, and then bating ſo cloſe a Confinement, makes haſte to break Priſon, and open thoſe Windows which expoſe her Meretricious Wares to publick View and Plague; and to draw a more univerſal Trade and Cuſtom, the very Caſe (whence this Raree-show ſtares out with her Whoriſh and bewitching Lights) muſt be Glazed and Guilt.

O Dinah, Dinah ! (the too clear Mirrour of our Unfortunate Age) my Soul bleeds for thee, the only Daughter of ſo great a Prince, the Delight of his Eyes and Joy of his Life ! what a wound didſt thou open in the Boſom of ſo dear a Parent ! What killing Sorrows did thy perhaps innocent and undeſigning, tho' moſt Tragical Curioſity, in gazing after ſuch Proſpects as theſe, heap on his woful aking Heart ! but what dreadful effects to thy ſelf ! the irrecoverable Loſs of thine Honour and his Peace together.

And thou England, the very Darling of Heaven, who haſt been wrapt in the diſtinguiſhing Coat of thy Father's Love, to the Envy and Sorrow of thy treacherous Brethren, who have been
Trucking

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Trucking with Ishmaelites to sell thee into Egypt, and dipping thy Coat already in Blood, to represent thee as devour'd, when themselves are the only Beasts that would do it ; (and Joseph is too truly torn in pieces by the Divisions and Animosities of their fomenting.) But let not Himself conspire in the Treason, nor break the Heart of his Father by sealing the Articles of his own Slavery. He will find a Lady in Egypt that will strip him again, and rent not his Coat only, but very Flesh off ; her Irons will enter into his Soul, if he consent not to her lewd Fornications. Egyptian Flesh was ever fatal to the Israel that doated on it. And 'tis impossible that Dinah should consent to the Rape, that yields her no pleasure at all ; and thô afterwards compounded into a Contract, even that will add still to her Torments, when anon it is written in the Blood of the Ravisher, and instead of an Husband she Wed a Corps : Should they deal with our Sister as with an Harlot ?

Nothing can betray us to Her Sorrows but Sin, nothing secure us but Obedience and keeping close under the Wings of a Father : We shall find (by the dreadful Examples) what rueful Effects Extravagancy and a wandring from God into Vanity and Folly hath brought upon the World, even from its Creation. Sin ever hath been, ever will be the great Apollyon of our Peace and Safety, whose Tragedies I have adventured (by

To the Reader.

too rude a draught) to expose to thy View, with the same design as once Anthony held forth the bloody Gown of the brave Cæsar, (all mangled and full of holes by the Daggers of his Murderers) on purpose to provoke the People to Revenge. In which undertaking, if Defects too many be discovered by the severe and censorious Reader, he will be more courteous sure than to wound me too, while he kindly remembers the shaking of my Hand with the very Fear and Apprehension of so bold an Attempt.

But come Reader, let us lay aside Words and be wise. Religion (with Joash) is left alone in the Temple, and none pitieth that solitary Princess; sure 'twill be our Advantage to unite to her Coronation, and unanimously Guard her while the Crown is putting on, and we see her re-invested in all her Regalities. Let Profaneness and Superstition (with Athalia) rend their Cloaths and Throats too, crying, Treason! Treason! (the Treason is all against Hell,) and let no Englishman be startled at the Plot: Nay, let every one come under the Guilt of it, not one Non-conformist to the Dominion of Grace; but should any stand off, let us leave them to the Tyranny of their own Athalia, while we ever cry with all Judah, (triumphing with Joy for the Restauration of the true Worship,) God Save the King, God Save the King,



THE

Angels Tragedy,

To my Reverend Brethren, the Messengers of Christ to the Churches; Metaphorical Angels, and spiritual Men, do I humbly offer this Tragedy: May not one of them make the Defection, or suffer the Eclipse of these unhappy Apostates; but ever shining in the lustre of their own Graces, may emit those Beams of Divine Light and Life as will irradiate and quicken the dead and benighted Souls of Men, that when God shall remove them from the lower Firmament to fix them above, they may altogether make up a glorious Constellation in Heaven, and shine there as Starrs for ever and ever.

2. PET. 2. 4.

If God spared not the Angels, &c.

TIS by slow and trembling Steps that I pass towards the Territories of the Miserable, thence to take a distant Prospect of the tremendous Executions made by Divine

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The Angels Tragedy.

vine *Justice* upon so great a Part of the once glorious *Spirits*, now hanging up alive in the Chains of fierce Wrath, and reserved unto the further Judgment of the great Day.

Methinks it is Pity that *Sin* hath so fair a Pretence to the glory of *High Birth*: We cannot deny it the Honour of a Noble *Extraction*, when we see it unluckily Issuing from the Heart of an Angel: For neither were those *Sons of God* at their first Creation bless'd in such an absolute Degree of Stability and Perfection, as should ever secure them from all possibility of falling into the Sorrows of so unnatural a Production.

But if already my *Plough* make a Baulk in this Tragick Field, and my Pen blunders to decipher this *Serpent's Root* from whence sprung up the Monster, my Reader may well remit it to me, when the great St. *Austin* throws it off with a *Non Deus sunt*: They were not God, but Created in a *Mutable* and not *Impeccable* Estate; *He charges his Angels with Folly*: But if Folly hath a Lodging in the Bosoms of those who each Minute *Behold the face of mine heavenly Father*, wonder not if (at this distance) it be graduated into perfect Distraction, and the Atheistical Fools of the Earth say in their Hearts, *There is no God*, because they see none; when they are not vouchsafed the dreadful Kindness of Diabolical Conviction, but are sentenc'd to the ruinous effects of an impudent *Obduration*, without the Mercy of a scrupulous Conscience, which in time might *Torment* them into a prudent *Recantation*.

How the *Holy Court* was Alarm'd at the breaking out of this *Viper*, (as of some *Flying Dragon* that

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that would have stung them all to Death) and what dreadful *havock* was wrought in a Moment, and how very many Thousands perished by its Venomous Sting, e're the most expeditious Orders could be issued out for the clearing the *sound* from the *infected*: And what *Decree* passed forth for their everlasting *Exile* thence, into the low-est *Abyss* of Darkness and Confusion, is so far from being *News* now adayes, that Heaven and Earth rings with the *Tragedy*.

And happy had it been for the *Younger Sons* of God, that this degenerous *Brood* had been ever closely confin'd within the limits of their own sooty Walls, and not permitted by their ranging about, to have had the Liberty of making their pernicious *How d'ye's* into the *Paradise* of Joy, where the Kindness of their Maker had so blessedly plac'd them together in Pleasure and Peace.

Very vainly does prying Curiosity make enquiry after the *Quality* of the Sin that wrought this Ruine, since perhaps Holy *Writ* is so obscure and reserv'd, with design to dictate a more prudent *Caution* against all; since whatsoever it were that slew an *Angel*, the very least of all may crush a *Worm*.

Yet to gratifie a little the Inquisitive *Humour*; know, that the very *Learned* are divided and strangely differ in their Opinions about it: Some laying the Ruine to the Charge of *Envy*, from their foreknowledge of God's determination in Promoting the Humane Nature into the ineffable Honour of *Union* with the Godhead, in neglect of their own; so *Zanchy* and others. *Cla-*

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mens Alexandrinus, Tertullian and Chrysostome think it to be *Luxury*, from *Gen. 6. 1.* But surely Spirits need no *Mistresses*. Others alleadge the Breach of a Positive *Command* and *Law* imposed upon them; and the *Rabbins* will have it of some Service to Man, which the proud *Angel* refusing was therefore cast down, an Opinion a little hard to be entertain'd; 'tis apparent their Fall preceded the *Creation of Man*. *Aquinas, St. Austin*, and the whole Current of Writers close with the Holy Ghost, in affixing the Guilt upon *Pride*; and methinks she is plainly enough too guilty of this Murther; [*1 Tim. 3. 6.*] Nay, the very Care and necessary *Caution* of every Good *Father* of the Church, in not laying too hasty Hands on light and frothy Persons, nor exalting them into the weighty Ministrations of the *Altar*, (since such may be tempted to swell into too high Conceits of themselves from the Dignity of their excellent Office, and so become Poysoned by the *Devil's Draught*, whom *Pride* had so strangely stupified into a forgetfulness of themselves, and puffed them into a Rebellion against their great Maker who had assign'd to them their proper *Functions*, (and to the *Prince* of them so glorious one) had they had but Grace to have kept *τιν' Ἀρχὴν*, their Noble State and Principality, and not left their Station or *Habitation*, (as *Jude* saith *v. 6.*) I say their Care and Vigilancy, must evidence for me that *Pride* is not slandered in the least by the Charge; (and I shall stand the Tryal if she sue me upon the Scandal) for we cannot be ignorant neither how some eminent Fathers have

expound-

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expounded that of *Isaiah* 14. 12. *How art thou fallen, O Lucifer! son of the Morning, &c. I will exalt my Throne above the Starrs: I will be like the most High;* to represent the Sin and Fall of the Proud King of *Babylon* by the Pride and Destruction of *Lucifer*.

E're we pass further, let us make a few Turns in the Chamber of *Contemplation*, and take a survey of the lamentable Ruine of an Angel, (of thousands of them) that this execrable Sin hath so traiterously dragged into irrecoverable Misery and Woe.

The *Angelical* Nature was doubtless the very Cream and Flower of the beautiful Creation of God: These *Spirits* are the glittering Courtiers of the King of *Glory*, clad in the very Livery of their Maker; the Garnish and Ornament of his *Palace*; *Heaven* it self but bare *Walls* (as it were) and unfurnished without them, cloathed with all such inexpressible Excellencies and Power, that surely they want no strength to shake the very *Foundations* of the Earth, and to make the Pillars thereof to tremble: 'Twas but One of them that in a Night sent an *hundred fourscore* and *five thousand* of such *Worms* as we with pleasure into Dust and their first Nothing: And another with a *Breath* only will blow up more *Myriads* out of it again. And yet no sooner had Sin, [that *melioris tunc regias*,] that scum and Excrement of filth, the very *Elixir* of all Poisons, cast its envenoming *Shadows* upon the fair Faces of these Glorious *Suns*, but they presently unloose from their several *Orbs*, dying into an Eternal *Eclipse*, and drop down into Darknes

and Horreur, stript for ever from their Native Eminences and *Holiness*, (the loveliness that once beautified their Natures) *Metamorphosed* into the most affrightful Image of all the most abstracted *Deformity* and *Vileness* expressible; deprived for ever of those Eternal Felicities to which they were Created, and are now become the very *Sources* and *Fountains* of all imaginable Lewdness and Mischief, which they are increasing still, by pouring out the whole *Flood* of their killing *Streams* to engulph us also in an everlasting Ruine. God in great Kindness to us hath discovered their now destructive Properties, and shewn us the danger we are in, while an whole Host of *spiritual Wickednesses* are round about us, as so many *roaring Lyons* ready to devour us, and are our avowed *Adversaries*, *Accusers*, *Murderers* and *Destroyers*, incessantly tempting us into the Rebellion with them, which they very well know will in the end lay us in the same Dungeon of Darknes with all the Chains of divine Indignation upon us that themselves are so dreadfully gall'd with: All which is no idle *Fiction* fram'd on the Forge of a Melancholly, fanciful or *Romantick* Brain, but a *Verity* as Infallibly Sealed by the Spirit of Truth to us, as any other the *Holy Oracles* have with the clearest Perspicuity conveyed to our Knowledge. And though too slightly regarded, yet witnessed to be, as *Just* on themselves, so *fatal* to us, (if we keep not the strictest Guard, and Invest our selves with the whole Armour of God) by One of their own Original Order and Degree; (Now for ever secured from the like Dangers of confederating

Treasons,

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Treasons, and Established into an Estate of entire and sinless *Perfection*,) from the profound Sense and grave consideration that himself had of it. While therefore he proclaims from Heaven the deplorable *Woes* to us (the poor *Inhabitants of the Earth and Sea*) from the ruining Consequences of their Power and Presence here below, *Revel. 12. 12.*

And 'tis matter of Astonishment to consider, how few are awakened by the *Trump* of that *Angel*, unto any, the least Reflection on the *Mischiefs* and *Miseries* effected in all Ages by the bloody Contrivances of these *Apostate Spirits*, who have prevailed to the overturning not of *Mighty Empires* and *Kingdoms* only, but of once the most flourishing *Churches* in the World, now overwhelmed with the black Cloud of *Pagan* and *Mahometan* Darknefs and Death, where *Divine Light* and *Truth* sent forth (then alas!) their sparkling Beams and Splendour; pouring in their mortal Dregs both of *Atheism* and *Error*, which deface the whole Beauty, and enervate the whole Strength of Original Piety and Religion; which they know well enough will dissolve the *Covenant* of Heaven, and give up to the Judgment not of a *Desertion* only, but *Divorce*. Who but these foment *Divisions* and *Schisms* and *Animosities* between Men, by puffing up some (and those of the meanest Capacity) into boundless and immodest Conceits of their own greater Wisdom and Parts, and hatefull disdain and Contempt of others, more worthy than themselves? Who so Industriously blow up the *Coals* of all *Dissension* and *Discord* between

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the most seemingly happy and united Fraternities, and invent the Aspersions of Ignominy and Reproach that are fix'd on each other? who but these whisper into the Ears and Hearts of Princes those needless Jealousies and Fears that cool them in their Kindness to their best *Subjects*, (whom they look on as the secret underminers of the Peace and Government, the very *Plagues* and *Pests* of the Age they live in, who are yet the very *Pillars* of the *Throne*) as if there were no consistency between God's *Empire* and their own? Who but these stir up *Kings* to ruine themselves by unnecessary *Wars*, and their poor *Subjects* by unnecessary *Sins*? Who but these beat up the Drums of *Sedition* and *Rebellion* against the best *Princes*, the very gracious Fathers of their People? Who petrifies the Hearts of *Tyrants* against their poor *Subjects* into the bloodiest Executions of their Wrath and Cruelty, not only grinding their Faces by cruel *Oppression* and *Impoverishment*, but sheathing the Sword of *Persecution* in the very bowels of *Innocency*, on no other account but this, that they refuse to attend them into *Hell*? Who but these have rais'd up all the *Assassinations* and *Massacres* upon the Body of the Church, not only by *Heathenish* and *Pagan* Instruments, but have sent their thousands and ten thousands into Death by the less merciful hands of those who (*Drunk with Blood*) have yet the blasphemous *Impudence* to call themselves by the Name of *Jesus*? Who but these had the *Brow* to move the Court of Heaven for the subversion of the whole *Colledge* of the *Apostles* at once, and with an equal Insolence to endeavour the

the utter evacuating the whole Project of our *Eternal Redemption* by tempting the great *Author* of it to cast himself upon sinful and unwarrantable Means of Preservation, and directly tending to his Ruine; and when that would not take, consult together more effectually to work their Ends by the cursed Treachery of his own *Servant*. In a word, these are they that have wrought all the late Storms and Tempests in the World; 'tis they have wrought all the Devastations that *Turkish* and *Gallican* Tyranny have executed for them: The unnatural Wars in our own Bowels, the horrid Massacres of the Church in *France* and *Ireland*, the deplorable Fews among our selves; these have kindled our *Fires*, burnt up our *Cities*, enflamed our *Spirits*, contrived the *Plots* of our *Ruine*, and are yet at work very briskly to bring them to Perfection.

And all this from the Inveterate Hatred they bear to God and Man, roaring as *Lyons* to devour, twisting themselves as *Serpents* to deceive; by all subtle wayes and wiles beyond all imagination, by secret and invisible *Engines* and *Artifices*, profound *Stratagems* and Devices, making use of all sorts of Means and *Instruments*, as well by real *Friends* as professed *Enemies*, to the very *Wife* of thy Bosom; nay, to the dividing thy self, and making a Party for themselves in thy Heart.

And yet we *snore* in our security, and dally in an insensibleness of any danger, while yet these mighty *Enemies* are round about; they fill the *Air* we breath in, and hover over our Heads, and are prying into all our most retired *Actions*,
and

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and are Witnesses to all our Villanies, to give Evidence against us in the last Day. Nay, they mingle themselves with our very Affections and Passions, and *fly-blow* our very Prayers, and *Devotions*, and Charities, endeavouring to render them all fruitless and unprofitable to us, and unacceptable to God. In short, instead of wishing well to us, assisting us in our *Work*, rejoycing in our Conversion, and ministring to our Comfort (the service of the good *Angels*) these repine at our *Welfare*, hinder our *Repentance*, Lull us along in our Security, terrifie our Spirits, imbitter our Lives, *enrage* our Enemies, *enstrange* our Friends, *disease* our Bodies, and *betray* our Souls: For all which, and infinite other unmentioned Calamities and *Disasters* from them, whom may we justly Curse and execrate (as the Original cause of all,) but *Sin*, which by its malignant *Influences*, and wicked *Inchantments*, from being amiable Creatures of the sweetest Inclinations and Affections, hath transformed them into real *Furies* and *Devils* against us?

Come hither, *Reader*, and with that *Roman Souldier*, envy me the Honour of preparing the *Funerals* of the great *Pompy* alone, but bring with thee all the *Luminaries* of thy Soul; gather all the straggling forces of thine utmost reason and considering Faculties (and all too little) to ruminate as thou oughtest on this rueful *Spectacle*. *David* once bitterly Mourned at the Bier of one Prince of *Israel*, Slain by the Treachery of an insolent Traytor: But *who hath slain all these? Heaps upon heaps*, once glorious *Princes* of Heaven. O see what a slaughter sin hath made upon them!

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them! And then consider the weight of that Argument presented to thee by *Peter* and *Jude*. If God spared not the *Angels* that sinned, but cast them down into *Hell*, and delivered them into Chains of darkness to be reserved unto Judgment; How will he spare thee? They were *Angels*, Infinitely above thee in the Dignity of their *Nature* and *Creation*; yet *Greatness* was no Argument for Mercy. They were a *Multitude* in the confederacy, yet neither did the *Number* of the Offenders move pity in the least, but one and all, *Thousands* of them to *Hell* without Mercy; yet it was the first Offence too, they sinned but *once*, (and some think but in *Thought*;) and Justice seized upon them to *Execution*, and God dealt not with them as with thee and me (*Reader*) on whom he hath long waited, even while we have been multiplying provocations, and stirring up his wrath to destroy us, yet still hath he waited to be gracious to us. And methinks 'twere pity to make a God wait in vain upon us, to lose all the Expences of his *Patiēce* and Expectation from us. We would do well to think on it, and the force of the Apostles most Pathetick Argument; *Despisest Thou the riches of his Goodness*, and *Patiēce*, and *Long-suffering*! *Thou* that art but a poor *Worm*, a *Clod* of the *Earth*, and no *Angel*, a Creature of Yesterday, and who art crushed before the *Moth*, and whose Foundation is in the *Dust*; *Despisest thou*? And who art *thou* that should despise a God? And to despise him too? To entertain low and unbecoming thoughts of Him, that could *Nod* thee into *Hell*, and send thee to accompany *Devils* in Torments! Not so much as to have an
Eye

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Eye towards him, or to spend a Look upon him, or to concern thy Thoughts about him, thinkest him unworthy of thy Notice or Observation, and yet a God, and such a one on whom *Angels* and blessed *Spirits* Gaze with unspeakable Admiration and Delight, not to have the least sense of him! — No neither whilst he is flowing out to thee in the sweetest of his Communications, that of his Goodness, to *despise Goodness*, and that *Goodness* not to others, but thy self, (thy self Reader) to despise a God who hath been so long good to thee! The very Fountain of all the good Mercies thou hast enjoyed, and herein good, as not to punish thee for the abuse of those Mercies, but is still waiting! Now if thy reason be not drench'd into a perfect Bruitishness, be thine own Judge, whether such Goodness *should not lead thee to Repentance*. A mercy he never vouchsafed to the *Angels*, never waited to see whether they would return or no, but for the first Sin delivers them to Justice, layes them in *Chains* and *reserves them to destruction*, while yet he is still Courting thee to come in and submit: Declares himself unwilling to ruin thee; makes Oath of it, That he hath no delight in thy Blood, but infinitely rather that thou shouldest *return and Live*; and thou may'st believe him, Reader, thou hast his very Heart in that Protestation. Well, 'tis not unworthy thy most serious Reflection to fix a while on Gods Severity towards these *Angels*, who are now under *Chains of wrath* (and thou art walking presumptuously on the snares of Death too) but should thy feet *stumble on the dark Mountains* (as they will) and the fall of thy Body shall burst out thy

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thy Bowels, and dash out thy Breath: Its possible Reader, thou maist find thy miserable Soul fetter'd in the same Chains that Haughtiness and Insolence hath betrayed them into, though now thou wilt not harken unto the *Ravling* of theirs, for the noise of thy *Charior*, and the *Ruffling* of thy *Pride*.

But pause a little, thou most exalted *Dust*, and view thy self in the *Glass* of these now wretched *Infernal Spirits*: Dost thou value thy self upon thine *high Birth*, and doth the Noblest Blood enrich thy Veins? Why these were the *First-born of God*, of the eldest Family, and but one Degree subordinate to the *blessed Trinity*, and never took their *Rise* from *Clay*, but were all *Spirits* and Glorious, yet has *Pride* destroyed them. Dost thou look *Bigg* on thy fellow Servants, and from thine high *Station* and Preferments in the Courts of Princes, swellest into a forgetfulness of thy mean *Original*? Why, *proud Ashes*, these were the *Illustrious Courtiers* of the King of *Glory*; and Attendants on the *Majesty* of Heaven,—— Yet *Pride* hath slain them. Art thou Commissioned from thy Master into *Power*, and delegated unto *Executions* from Royal Authority? Why, these even in their low Estate are *Powers* still, and can (if Licens'd) make the *Earth to tremble*; are the *Princes of the Air*, and keep their Court in thine own Heart too, and though stript of their *Holiness*, yet are Commission'd often unto frequent and fearful Executions (and God deliver us from their Tyranny!) yet they are but *Hell-hounds* still, and their *Pride* hath undone them.

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Dost thou Glory in thine *Attendants* and long Train, the *Set* of *Liveries* that encompass thy *Chariot*, and the many *Slaves* thou hast at thy Service? Know (*Seignior*) that *Belzebub* hath his *Legions* too, and in a more perfect subjection and conformity than thine, he hath them all at his perfect beck and absolute Service, his *Subjects* are no *Rebells* against him, but go and come at the least Nod of his pleasure, and yet this great Prince hath his *Chains* on him, and *Pride* hath made him a Prisoner of Wrath.

And (might I be so bold) I would humbly Address me to the Man of Art and Science, whose *Soul* dwells in the *Sun*, while others look out thro' the dark *Dormants* of a glimmering Light, and walk in the *Cloister* of Obscurity and Ignorance. The *Gyant* that is *Head* and *Shoulders* above Others in all the *Dimensions* of profound Parts, subtile Brain, most exquisite Learning and Acquisitions: Thou knowest already, that this Society of the *Dark Order*, were once All *Light* and *Intelligences* themselves; and now in the state of their *Degeneracy* are yet *Masters* of universal Knowledge, not only *Magical* and *Philosophical*, but *Theological* too, and can give the Explanation of the most abstruse *Mysteries*: And from their natural *Sagacity*, long *Experience*, *Astrological Conclusions*, and extraordinary *Revelations*, can Pierce into Future Events, and have often uttered their *Prophecies* and foretold things that have happened: While *Thou* suckest in knowledge by *Drops*; They Roll in the whole *Ocean* of it, and yet alas, all this *Light* is but perfect *Darkness*, and a *Torch* that leads them to Hell, and but to a clearer Discovery

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covery of their own Misery and Sorrow; is void of all Comfort and Peace, and strikes nothing but *Terror* and *Confusion* into them, being imbittered with *Envy* and obstinate *Malice* against God and all *Idea's* of Goodness. To thy *Knees* therefore, to thy *Knees* get thee (most mighty *Rabbie* :) O for the sparks of *Seraphick Love* to fall down on and *enflame* thy *Frigid Affections*, and to *Sanctifie* all thine *Aiery* and Unprofitable *Notions*, into the *Heat* and Life of *Charity*, Consolation and Joy in God.

Nor must I forget my fine *Lady*, while the *Glass* is in the Room: *Ladies* love *Glasses*, and spend too much time in gazing upon them; come Madam, lend us here your Eyes a little, here are *Angels* attend you:— Nay do not startle, *Lady*, they can do you no Mischief (if you do your self none.) 'Tis but a *Coachful* or two from the *Dark Region*, that are come to pass a short *Visit* this Evening with you; They have brought you some *Patterns* of the Newest Fashion with them, and think you may need them. Your pale Cheeks want a little *Enlightning* too, and these have excellent *Fucus* to sell, can furnish your *Ladiship* with the most bewitching *Colours*, and can inspire you into the rarest knowledge of *Tempering* and *Laying*; and for *Patches* there are none like those they *Cut*, and will leave you *Directions* how to stick them so, as (if you please) they shall never *fall off* more: They are *Blacks* themselves, and love to promote the Honour of their *Country* Complexion. They are sent by their great Prince with a Message of an *Eiow-d'ye* to you, and know you are at leisure enough to receive

receive them; and in truth they have little else to do, but to be *Tutors* to young *Ladies*. Themselves were *Scholars* to Madam *Pride*, who has instructed them into all the *Figures* and *Arts* of most perfect *Dresses*. They love *Gawdry*, and were once most absolute *Beauties* themselves; they are indeed a little *Tawny* now from the *Torrid Zone* wherein they Breathe, but if you please, can *Transform* themselves into a *Lighter* shape, and then will appear less frightful to you. — Come, let us see whether you can vie *Beauty* with them. Bring out all your *Merceries* cover'd o're by the strutting *Embosses* of spangling *Gold*, till nothing appear but the Massy *Embroideries* sparkling *Lustre*. Send for your *Tire-women*, let them *Curle* up your dangling *Locks* into the most bewitching *twines*, then lodge the *rosie Blush* on your *lilly Cheeks*, and *Lips*: Let a glorious *Aire* and *Meen* dwell on every *Feature*, no *Motion* or *Posture* of your whole *Body*, but what may strike *Wonder* and *Ecstasie*. Come, pass on now by *Majestick* *Paces* to the *Chamber* of *Presence*, where these goodly *Creatures* attend you. Ah! is this all the *Shine* you can make? See how they dazle you into perfect *Deformity* and *Contempt*! And yet they can shew you variety of *Exchanges* every hour, and have often done it when they have pleas'd to appear in *Masquerade*. And can *You* find in your *Heart* to be *Devils* too, dress'd up in all your *Gaieties* with no other design than to *Tempt* and *Destroy*, to *Bewitch* others and your selves into the *Ruines* of the *Damned*? What think ye, is it not pity such *Creatures* as these should be scorch'd with ever-

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lasting *Heats*, cloath'd all in *Gowns of Flame*, who were once Attir'd by a *Divine* hand, into such Amiable Perfections as Expression fails to tell you how brightly they shin'd in their *Celestial Robes*, and yet Pride has Devested them of all, undress'd them into Shame and eternal Sorrow; Yes, Madam, Pride has done it, their Golden Tresses like *Medusa's* Head, are turn'd to *Snakes* and *hiss*, yet cannot fright you.

And thou *Parfy* Man of *Wealth*, that hast Enclosed thy self in *Cedar*, and mounted thy *Towering Soul* high as thy proud *Structures*, and with that haughty *Monarch* art ravish'd in Admiration of the *Pile* of thy *Glory*: Wilt thou not vouchsafe one Glance from thy *Turrets* upon these *Spirits*, and remember in what State they once lived? In a *City* built and furnish'd as Richly as Infinite Power and Wisdom could contrive and expend for its *Glory*. The very *Gates* of *Pearl* and the *Streets* of *pure Gold*: An *House* made with no other *Hands* than what a *God* hath. Yet from all that *Height* and *Magnificence*, Pride has tumbled them down into a *Tophet* whose *Chambers* are deep and large too, but whose *Fire* burns, and is enkindled by the *Breath* of an incens'd *God* into a streaming *Flame* for ever. And are you sure (*Sir*) that your *Walls* are strong enough to secure you from the like *Tragedy*? 'Twill be a dreadful *Change* to pass out from your *Stately Pallace* into a scorching *Hell*.

But what must we pity *Devils* then? No, but our *selves* rather, who in a dreadful *Fearlessness* are merrily passing on to the same *Misery*, and

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sure they Merit little Pity from us, who lay so many *Trails* of Ruine for us, to drag us into the Sorrows themselves endure; and would but *Mock* and deride us if in Torments with them. Nor have I the Charity of *Origen*, to believe that all the Flames in which they Suffer, will ever prevail to Purge out the *Malignity* of their Poisonous Natures, nor refine them into *Purity*. Truth it self hath averr'd, that their *Fire* shall never, never be quenched, (*and if it were not so, he would have told us.*) No, Reader, no, *Pride* hath done their work for them to the purpose, and thoroughly fix'd them the open avowed Irreconcilable Enemies of God and all Goodness; yet still methinks, to see these Great and Mighty *Princes* footing it as *Servants* upon Earth, or wandering in the *Air* with the Shackles of Vengeance at their *Heels*, for these *Principalities* (with the *Fingers* and *Toes* of their Native Royalties cut off) to be banish'd into the place of *Dogs*, to pick *Scraps* from under the Table, and to swallow the *Bones* of Eternal Affliction, with no other *Drink* than the *Poison* of *Dragons*, and the *Dregs* of the Wrath of the Almighty, cannot be in the sense of all but a sad and deplorable *Spectacle*: And though we cannot so Pathetically commiserate their *Degradation* and *Sorrows*, yet are we more senceless and hardened than they, if when after God hath hung them up before the Sun, in the *Fetters* of his fiercest Anger, and made them the lasting Monuments of his *fiery Indignation* to all Generations; If I say while we *Gaze* on Them, we do not *Compassionate* our selves and fortifie our Spirits by all imaginable Care against

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against the Mischiefs of Sin (that of *Pride* especially) which hath brought all these Plagues and Judgments upon them.

*Buoys of d're Vengeance chained here,
To raise up Universal Fear;
To Quash the Mountains, and melt down
The Pride of each Terrestrial Crown:
Rattle your Fetters into th' Ears
Of a Deaf World that laughs at Fears.
(While yet You Tremble) These Secure
(As if as Innocent, as Pure
As once were you) themselves Immure.
Methinks an Hierarchy in Hell
Might sink the Tumour, tho' it swell:
If not, the Baffle will soon appear
All on Themselves (not Me) when There.*

Adam's Tragedy,

Brethren in the Common Nature, (however distinguished by Accidents of Life.) The Progeny of the first Adam, subjected by Him to Sin and Death: Redeemed from all by the Blood of a Saviour: (Were there in you an Heart agreeable to that Grace) Do not Baffle the Project of the Trinity to save you; nor Frantickly Tear off the Plaister designed to Heal you: Heaven is no place for unsanctified Flesh, stand to the Tryal if you dare: The Judge is at the door, that will more sensibly convince you, who hath sent you word before-hand, That without Holiness no man shall see God. Hast out of the Rotten House of your first Father, and while Vengeance pursues you, you are Mad indeed, if you fly not to the City of Refuge.

1 COR. XV. 22.

In Adam all dye.

SIN having made this havock above, and glutted it self with *Angels Blood*; let us now pass on to take a view of the direful Desolations it hath wrought below; 'Twill fight

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neither against *Small nor Great*, but only against *Kings*; for having already destroyed these *Spiritual Princes*, it still pursues the *High Game*, and now lets fly at the first and Greatest on Earth.

When the *Eternal Word* spake things into *Being* that had no *Pre-existence*, and commanded admirable *Order* and *Form* to start up out of *Confusion* and *Chaos*; He not only gave a *Naked Life* to his *Creatures*, but cloathed them with unexpressible *Beauty* and *Ornament*; each *Creature* richly garnish'd in his *Natural Dress* that was meet and proper to it: But to *Man* (the Lord of all) did he reserve a double *Suit*; He designs him the *Epitomy* of the whole *Creation*, and to participate of both *Natures*: His *Better Part* (the *Soul*) he Enamels with the sparkling *Beams* of his own *Divinity*, and Cloaths it in no other than his own *Livery*, and Creates it a *Spirit* like himself, *Glorious in Holiness*. This inestimable *Jewel* he wrap'd up in a *Casket* (the *Body*) very curiously and wonderfully wrought, to become a *Chariot* for the *Noble Soul* to move in: And this very *Case* he fashioned into such excellent *Symmetry* of *Parts* and *Perfection*, as should shew in each *Lincament* and *Proportion*, the unparallel'd *Wisdom* and *Power* of its *Maker*; and was so far from needing a *Mantle* to cover *Defects*, as *Nakedness* it self was its best *Ornament*, and *Innocence* its *Natural Robe*. God himself delighting to see him in no other *Vesture*, and himself not blushing to appear before his great *Creator* in it. All the *Creatures* did their *Homage* to him in no other *Dress*, when they presented themselves so
humbly

humbly to *take Name*, which He, as their God on Earth, gave Wisely and Suitably to their *Natures*. The Loss of a *Rib* was so far from being any Blemish to his *Person*, that he soon finds it again wrought up into the Perfection of a *Delicate Lady*, as Beautiful and Entire as *Himself*: And being but himself divided, renders him still more compleatly Perfect. And thus the Lord of the *Creation* receives his Stately *Bride* from the immediate Hands of his God, and is Blessed in the Fruition of a *Princess* Congenial to his *Nature* and *Honour*: When in a *Paradise* of unspeakable Pleasures, did this High and Happy *Pair* deliciously enjoy themselves and their Maker, with all the Reciprocations of the Dearest Love and Joy.

Now to Consummate this *Happiness*, the *Perpetuity* of all is kindly offered them, on the Easie *Condition* of a Thankful *Obedience*: (Alas!) 'Tis but the *Rent* of a *Pepper-corn* for so vast a *Revenue*. The Great *Landlord* will reserve to Himself a *Propriety* but in one *Plant*, which by no means he must *Encroach* on, under the Penalty of certain *Death*: while the *Fruition* of all the Rest shall be Sealed to him by *Another*, which is Hallowed into a *Sacrament* for immutable Confirmation to him. He humbly Bows, and is content to live no longer, than while he pays the *Tribute* of so *Reasonable Service*.

But the banished *Crew*, who rov'd up and down in the *Air* and *Earth*, (now perfectly stript of all the Glories of their happy *Creation*, and of all Hopes of any possible *Re-investiture* into Divine Favour,) and ready to burst with *Rage* and

Malice, when they find that God had raised up to himself Children from the Dust of the Earth, that paid him a greater Honour than they, and were now become the Blessed Heirs of his Grace, and the *Mercies* themselves had so justly Forfeited, began to Conspire the Means of recking their *Revenues* against both, between whom there appeared so seemingly Irrefragable Union of Friendship.

And is there no way (think the Infernal Wretches) to deface this so goodly *Fabrick*, so Accurately set up and brought to so lovely Perfection? No means to cool this Feryour of Fondness and Affection betwixt these new Confederates? What, cannot a Council of Devils break this Tripple League? Were not we our selves in as fair Probability of standing unmoveably in his Favour, yet are now broken off? And does all our Misery serve us to no purpose at all, nor instruct us into Methods of *Revenge*? Sure the Expedient is at hand already, and can we act by any better Engine than what hath unscrewed our selves from his Heart? Can we work by any more proper Tool than *Pride* that has ruin'd us all? She that hath been so Politick to out-wit *Spirits*, cannot want her Arts to cast a fair Mist before the Eyes of the Children of the Worm, while she blows her Venomous Breath upon them. And is that newly start-up Lady so stiff and strait-lac'd, that no dainty cringing Address may prevail to warp her to the Impressions of *Pride*? So Coy and Reserv'd that no Insinuations can bow her to the Suggestions of a greater Happiness than yet she enjoys? Why she is but a Woman,
made

made of a *Rib*, and *Bent* already to give Life to our hopes: Cannot *Pride* smooch her up to the tickling Conceits of an higher *Empire*, and display the Felicities of a *Goddeſs* to her? Intimate that her *Maker* is jealous already of his *Supremacy*, and providently to secure it, hath Fettered them up by a Law from the only means of both their *Promotions*: But if they will, may be *Gods* themselves as well as *He*. Let her view the enclosed *Tree*, and judge whether its *Fruit* have not *Charms* which none but Weakness and Folly would refrain from; and bears Meat not proper only for *Gods*, but whose very Digestion would produce *Immortality*. They may (but) taste themselves into *Desty*. And then for an Assistant, hath she not the *Serpent* (a subtle Creature) to *Organize* the Errand and speak by, that knows so curiously to *Curl* himself into *Welcome* and *Audience*, and by a thousand *Cringes* will wriggle himself into Acceptance.

And thou *Pride*, we conjure thee to dart thy Mortal Sting, (whose griping Pains still stick in our Hearts) strike it into every part of their *Souls*: While we our selves will Assist thee in the *Project*, and make them know we will not Smart alone under the Frowns of an Angry God, but shall let them see how just it is, they should bear a share with us in the bitter Fruits of *Rebellion* and Folly.

'Tis no news to the Reader, that this execrable Plot was crowned with its wish'd-for Success, and how *Pride* plaid her part in the Tragedy so much to the Life, that all the *Pit* of Hell paid her the Honour of the *Clap* and the *Hum*.

Love

Love and Life lye Bleeding together: The Divinity disappears and retreats into Heaven, to Solace it self in it self, since all the Sparks of it here below are fully extinct, and Darknes covers again all the Earth. The very Devils prosper in their Ruinous Plots, and if infinite Wisdom be not able to temper good Physick from this Venom, the Foundations of the World must dissolve into Nothing, the Creation drop into its first Confusion, to Bury the Sinners in its Ruines.

No sooner had Miserable Man shut his Ear from his Maker, and opened it to the Viper and Lust, but the first visible Effect of his Folly was *Shame* (which never since hath broken off its Attendance on *Sin*) for *Pride* having rent off the *Garment* of their Native *Simplicity* and *Innocence* which fenced them from every Danger, the Angry *Winds* begin to revenge their Creator's Quarrel, and boldly assault their shivering Joynts: They feel already the *Cold* Effects of their Weakness, and their very Souls Blush to see how *Sucorless* and *Naked* they had left themselves. *Modesty* Suggests the Necessity of a *Covering*, and themselves can think of no better than the complicated Branches of a *Tree*; not of the *Lawrel* wreath'd into Crowns of *Victory* (alas! here was all *Defeat*) but of the poor *Fig* Platted into the inglorious Shrouds of *Shame*. Unhappy *Adam*! Hadst thou wisely refrain'd from the *Fruit*, thou hadst never needed the *Leaves*. Thus (*Reader*) those who slighted the Protection of the God of Nature, became *Debrors* to a contemptible *Vegetable*, and are obliged to a *Leaf* to Periwig their Baldness

Baldness and Poverty. But Alas! *Leaves* had but little *Wear* or *Warmth*, they soon *Wither* and *Rot*; whose very dropping from their *Loins*, (dead and *Sapless* because separate from their *Root*) seem to take *Voice*, and loudly upbraid the *Weakness* of those that wore them, and the *Impossibility* of *Life* to such who were now *broken off* from the *Fountain* of it. Blessed God! To what *Covert* shall he betake himself that flies from thee? They *multiply Sorrows* that hasten after another God. How unpitied are the *Rags* of the *Prodigal*, who left the *Rich Wardrobe* of his *Fathers Treasures*, to *Cloath* himself with *Confusion*!

Fig-leaves Adieu! Wither and dye,
I've other Leaves to dress me by:
A Tree whose Leaves do ever thrive,
And which alone dead Souls Revive;
One who has Curs'd both Leaves and Wood
For not affording any Good;
Kindly consulting General Weal,
Left those behind that Nations Heal;
Whose Vertue wisely understood,
Are found both Medicine and Food:
Then turn them, Reader, o're and o're,
Adam's lost Glory they'll restore.

Gold and *Shame* are but the beginning of *Man's Sorrows*: If his *Members* shake with the gentle *Gales* of *Paradise*, how will his *Heart* tremble at the *Whirlwind* of his *Offended Makers Voice*! *Shame* is the *First-born* of *Sin*; and *Fear* takes it by the *Heel* as a *Twin* of the same *Birth*: He
 Fears

Fears and Flies, but in vain from him that is every where: And he that first seeks a *Covering* for his *Shame*, is now seeking another for his *Sin*, and would gladly Pin his *Fig-leaves* on his *Makers Back*, whom he Blasphemously Impeaches as the *Sinner*, for his kindness in giving him a *Wife*. I tremble to see how low he falls, who hath once lost his hold of *Grace*: *O let everlasting Arms be underneath me!* Since such is the Villany of *Nature*, that it would *Condemn a God* to save it self! But what is more *Stupendious* yet, The *God* is content it should be so, and that a *Cross* be fram'd of the *Fatal Tree* for *Himself* to *Hang on*, that while his *Eye* should be fixt on the *Prodigy*, (when yet the *Sun* shut his) his *Heart* (with the *Veil of the Temple*) might be *Rent* into a *Thousand Shivers*; which when laid on the *Altar*, should become a *Sacrifice* too (perfum'd by his own) that shall serve to expiate his *Guilt*: *For a broken and a contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* Sure the Sence of so *Astonishing Love*, would Melt him into *Repentance* and a *Flood of Tears*; but if not, he deserved to dye for ever.

Paradise is no longer a *Place* for *Rebels*, who have forfeited their *Right* to the *Tree of Life*: Away to the *Plantations* with them; *Hard Labour* and *Sweat* will humble them into more *Sober* thoughts of themselves, than thus to *Aspire* after *Deity*. How hardly is the *Glass of Prosperity* holden by a *stedfast hand* without *Breaking!* but how *Afflicting* is the remembrance of an *Happiness* lost by our *Folly!* And I doubt not but every step that poor *Adam* trod out of his delicious *Garden*,

Garden, was made upon *Thorns*, that ran up into his very *Heart* to make it Bleed. And I humbly beg my *Reader*, upon the bare Knees of my Soul, that he would *Bathe* his Heart in the *River* of the *first Sinners* melting Sorrows for the loss of an *Earthly Paradise*: Since the Time may come, that he Himself may *Weep* the like unprofitable Drops under the Forfeiture of an *Eternal Heaven* (for the sake of a few Momentary and Perishing Lusts) where a *Sea* of them will little avail him in a place of *Torment*. And I do assure him, That the Caution swims to him in a Flood of my own at the writing of it, and could be content (if it might benefit him more) that it were *Printed* with the *Blood of my Heart*. But how Faint and Senseless are my Hopes, when I see the Rock of *Obduration* so far from yielding these precious *Waters* at the *Strokes* of the *Prophets*, that the Impenetrable *Adamant* was no wise dissolvable by the *Tears* or *Blood* of a weeping God.

The Naked Offenders must in pity be *Clothed*, and their very *Garments* are part of their Punishment. They shall do *Penance* in *Hair-Cloth*. Those whom *Pride* had blown up into the Conceit of being *Gods*, shall sneak up and down in *Skins of Beasts*: Sure the *Skins* of those *Brutes* (however Tann'd) were but a *Rugged Shift* for the tender Body of the *Mother* of all Living.

See, *Reader*, see, the First and Greatest Princes of the Earth, (e'er ever Kingdoms or Empires were bounded out, and divided among Crowned Heads, see these) that held the Scepter of the *Universe*, thus Treacherously betrayed by *Sin*,
into

into so vile an Estate of Dishonour. They are wrapt up in *Leathern Suits*, which doubtless they put on and off with infinite Shame and Sorrow, in Reflection upon the loss of their Glorious Robes. The wily Serpent had told them indeed, that their *Eyes should be opened*, and 'twas true enough, but to what? To the Sight of their unspeakable Misery and Woe, that lending so easie an Ear to the Impostures of that Grand Deceiver, they saw themselves Gull'd out of all their *Original Happiness and Bliss*. Thus Adam that was *Created in Honour*, but *understood not his own Felicity* in the Favour and Fellowship of his God, fell as in a Moment from it, and *became like the Beasts that perish*, walking up and down in his *Shaggy Suit*, which (with the Hairy Baptist) was ever Preaching Repentance and Mortification to him. It may be true, what is written of Peter, that every Crowing of the Cock, was a new Peal that alarm'd him to fresh Sorrows; but sure each Glance of Adam's Eye upon his Beastial Coat, made him go forth and weep bitterly.

Thus Sin hath brought forth Shame, and Shame a Necessity of Garments; to be proud therefore of Garments, what is it but to be proud of our Shame? nay, to Glory in our Sin, that hath brought that Shame and Necessity upon us. And this minds me of Tertullian, contemplating Adam in his Skins: Lo (saith he) *Homo Pellitus Orbi, quasi Metallo datur*. Man, the Lord of the whole World, is sent out of Paradise in a *Leathern Jerkin* to work as a Slave in the Mines. That Garb very well suiting the Spade and the Mattock,

Mattock, and his *Wife* allowed no other Dress, her Soft Skin covered with a Pelt only, at the very mention of which, her delicate *Daughters* fall a shuddering and are uneasy, but mightily Mortified for the Misery she hath brought upon them; when, (Good Souls) they do Penance with her in *Rolls* of the *finest Linnen*, and the *softest folds of Sattin and Silk*.

This was an *Wound* to Man indeed, but *Heaven* it self must Smart: 'Twas not so strange an Indignity to those who had made themselves as *Beasts*, to be thus lapp'd up in their Skins: But for God himself to be fetch'd out of *Paradise*, and made to walk up and down in a Skin upon Earth, for *Deity* to put on a Skin too: This is the insufferable Fruit of their Folly, (but the incomparable Evidence of his *Love*.) Nay, and while these might walk warm and secure in theirs, He (Alas!) cannot keep his own *Whole* upon his Back, but is all over *Rent* and *Torn* from the crown of his Head (where the *Thorns* pierce it) to the sole of the Foot, (where the *Nails*) when *Agonies* from Wrath above, *Whips* and *Spears* from Rage below, dips him all into *Blood*, his Skin becoming as *Joseph's Coat*, which he carries back (with all the *Breaches* and *Rents* upon it) to shew the very *Angels* whom he might thank for all this.

But to teach us the Lesson of *Humility* and due Moderation in our *Habit*, you may Note, how little value the great God puts upon the Body (on which he hath stamp't the Character of *Vile*) while he presently wraps it in a Cover of Skins, and thinks it fine enough when it answers the
ends

ends of Security from Nakedness and Cold, when yet his *Wisdom* took nigh *four Thousand* years e'er he finished the *Garment* that should guard the Soul from the more dangerous *Attacks of Sin and Death*.

All *Peace*, all *Quiet*, no Murmurs here, no Pleas for *Gandy Cloaths* or Changes of Attire; they humbly offer their Guilty Shoulders to the rugged *Hide*, in meek Submission to the good Pleasure of their great Creatour. *Those who are unworthy of Life, may not stand on Terms of Vanity*. Surely very meek and resigned is humble *Guilt*; nor did ever *broken Heart* quarrel at the *Rents* of its own making. Lord if it be Thou, let me come to thee, tho' in a *Fisher-mans Coat*.

But was *Cold and Blushing*, the only Effects of the *Consult* of Hell against poor Man? This all the depth of their Plot? Ah no! for if *Pride* had been so Modest or Merciful to have stript him only (with the *Egyptian Strumpet*) of the spoils of the *Upper Garment*, (the treacherous *Flesh*,) had it bruised the *Case* only, or pluck'd up the stakes of the moveable *Tabernacle* and bury'd it all in it's *Orignial Dust*, the *Tyranny* still had been easie and supportable, while the *Jewel* within had made an escape with all the *Treasures* of her *Excellencies* whole and untouch'd; had she been so kind to have left some memorable *Marks* of her *Cruelty* on the exterior *Perfections* of his Beauty, the whole *Creation* would have called a Parliament, and humbly have offered their *Loyal Subsidies* to their great *Sovereign*: Each *Bird and Beast* would have been proud to wrap him in their *Down and Furrs*, each
Blossoms

Blossom and *Flower* would have sewed Themselves together to have made them *Summer-suits*, as *Shem* and *Japhet* they would have hid their *Faces*, while they had reverently mantled the defects of their *Lord*. But O *Cruelty* never to be forgotten, never to be mention'd without horror! The *Robe of Immortality* is not only rent off from the stately *Pavilion* of the Body, but the bloody Tyrant kills the *Porter* at the Door, with design to make way to the rifling the Richer *Closets* within. As *Lightning*, it values not the *Sheath* so it can but melt down the *Steel* of the Interior Power and Strength, and trembles not to adventure into the *presence Chamber* of the great *Queen*, whom all Pale and even Dead with fear, he invades with insufferable Insolence, flying in her *Sacred Face*, and with unmerciful Hands tearing out those glorious *Lights* that lately sparkled Joy into the Heart of her *Maker*, and in a moment Devests her of all those *Royalties* which made even a God to doat upon her: And then (to perfect the sorrow) the Sorcerer forces into her weak and bloodless hand a *Circean Cup* of *Magical Poisons* (tempered together by his own mischievous Fingers) which the unhappy Princess too greedily swallows (as what she thought might quickly Period her sorrows) but (Destruction on him) would you know the execrable effects of that fatal *Draught*? The poor Soul (instead of expiring) falls into a perfect *Frensie*, when immediately you might have seen her throwing her unfortunate Self into the Cursed Arms of the cruel *Deflowerer*, and in Postures of most *Lascivious Courtship*, Kissing the very hands

that had made the *Rape* upon her Sacred Person, and with a Fondness as Strange as Unparallel'd, Sacrifices all her Powers to the *Lusts* of her Mortal Enemy. Have you not seen some poor *Distract*, rolling in *Straw*, with her *Hair* dishevil'd, in *Rags* all torn, winding her *Face* into infinite forms? Now casting out *Melancholly smiles*, and those followed by *pitiful Sighs*, which as soon are exchanged into *loud Laughter*, and that, dying into a *plodding Silence*, while she knits her *Straws* into a thousand *knots*, and tearing them again into pieces with fury; Glad of every *Feather* to play with, and adoring the smallest *Sun-beam* with ridiculous *Ceremonies*; till the noise of her *Keeper* startles her into trembling, whom she fears and flatters at once, as *glad* of his coming, yet *afraid* of his stay: In short, most perfectly insensible of her own *Sorrows*, and equally incapable of removing them, she renders her self a willing Prisoner to her own *Affliction*, and imagines her very *Dungeon* a *Pallace*?

This (alas) is too imperfect a *Pourtraiture* of this *Princesses Lunacy*, in whom the *Complacencies* of her first *Affections* (so pure and ravishing) are all drown'd in the *flote* of new senseless *Passions*, who in the loss of ineffable *Felicities* of divine *Amours*, and the dearest *Embraces* of a *God*, distractedly falls in Love with *Feathers*, and *Straws*, and *Shadows*, and every thing, and is unhappily betrayed to Court her very *Torments* and *Plagues*. *My people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit*, Jer. 2. 11.

Now to make the *Tragedy* yet more compleat, each *Scene* of it is *Acted* in the very Presence of her

her great *Lord*, who had but plac'd himself behind the *Tapistry* for tryal of her *Fidelity* and *Love*, where he makes this Lamentable *Discovery* of her treacherous *Disloyalty*, and sees her thus miserably surpriz'd.

The whole *Court* above, expected nothing less than Ten thousand Deaths to have been darted into her false and ungrateful Heart, and look't each minute for her Sentence into everlasting *Tortures*: When (O unfathomable Goodness) instead of Punishment and Death, her dearest Lord commiserates the poor *frantick*, and Summoning a *Council* of the profoundest *Wisdom* (where *Love* sat *President*) he graciously consults the most effectual Means for the rendring her to her self again, and applying the most proper Remedies of removing (at least abating) the *Distemper*, and doubts not but her more sensible *Reflections* on his Kindness and Pity, will endear her again to a more careful and faithful Obedience and Duty, when in the right use and improvement of her Reason, she shall prudently animadvert on the tenderness of his Heart, and the *Royalty* of his Care and Provisions for her.

While the Debate was hotly carried on by the whole *Trinity*, see One of themselves— But here Reader, Expression fails me, and never yet were Words found out (never shall be) to delineate that *unutterable Goodness*, which God himself so highly commended, and the very *Angels* stand astonished at, and for which *Thousands of thousands*, and *Ten thousand times Ten thousand* of the Heavenly *Quire* pour upon his glorious Head infinite Blessings and *Hallelujahs* for Ever

and Ever, and the Soul that joyns not in that *Eulogy*, let him be *Anathema Maranatha*, Accursed till Himself comes to pronounce him so to all Eternity.) This glorious One not only intercedes for her *Pardon*, but undertakes the *Cure*, and so passionately pursues the *Request*, that he generously offers to wash away the stain of her disloyalty with the dearest *Blood* of his Heart. But because he had yet *None* (for he was *God* too) he would draw some from his Patient, and artificially temper it into a *Body* for himself, which his *Divinity* shall Consecrate into so spotless a Purity, and immaculate Perfection, as should highly ennoble his Blood, and make it so Meritorious and Rich, that when it should come to be poured out from his precious Veins, will abundantly satisfy the expectations of *Justice*, and serve to be a full *Propitiation* for the whole Offence, (for he took it on purpose to Bleed it out again, to finish the Project of his Love, and her perfect Redemption and Safety.) And thus was *Himself* contented to die for her, and at the dear Price of his own Life to purchase her wholly to himself, while he expects she will devote her self wholly to his absolute Service and Honour, and ever pay him the grateful Returns of her Heart for so unconceivable Kindness and Love: While he will Operate by such other *Methods*, as (he fears not) shall accomplish her entire Restoration, and render her again an Object of *Beauty*, to the holy Eyes of her Maker, by the *Loveliness* that he himself will put upon her. Tho' yet he finds from too visible *Symptoms* that the *Diffusion* of the Venome thro' every part, (and which had so sadly corrupted

corrupted her *Seminals*) would greatly endanger her *Posterity*, to whom the Disease would be certainly communicated with her *Nature*; (And alas! the experience of some *Thousands of Years* have given too clear a Testimony of that dismal Truth,) yet she might comfort her Self in this, That his Care should constantly attend them too, he will ever be ready to administer to Them also; and to all but such whose outrageous *Madness* would leave them utterly incapable of his healing Prescriptions; and whose *Infection* would work to so high a *Pitch*, as to cause them desperately to slight the *Remedies* that his Wisdom and Goodness had prepared for them.

No *Bounds*, no *Rampires* could hinder the *Flood-Gates* of mine Eyes from flowing out into the deepest Streams at the hearing the Account of this rueful *Massacre*. All the World destroyed at one blow in their Great *Representative*! Not a *Birth* but what should add a *Rebel* against Heaven, and a Subject to *Sin*! That's a *Triumph* with a Witness, that insults over the Ruine of the whole *Race*: 'Twas but a *Left Wing* of the *Angels* that Pride had unhappily cut off, but here the whole *Progeny* of *Adam* lye mortally bleeding to Death; and not one escapes to tell the sad *Story* of their own *Defeat*: Nay God Himself wounded in the Rout; Necessitated to take the Field, and fall in it too, be Buried in the Common Grave, and had there *seen Corruption*, had not his *Divinity* reliev'd him.

Come, Reader, let us conferr a while: There

is a passage lately dropt from that Great *Physician*, who upon view of his *Patients* corrupted Blood, seem'd to *shake his Head*, and pity her whole Progeny. It would be worth a little pains to search out the Truth, and make some *Experiment* in our selves: (Sure he meant not that *Bedlam*, her first Production who so barbarously kill'd his Brother in the Field where the *Mad Blood* boil'd up so hotly within him, and the poor Innocent fell by his Bloody hands from no provocation at all, but *loving* him who had wrought so good a *Cure* upon him, and was growing up towards perfect *Recovery*; No, no,) 'Tis the whole Posterity; and our selves are surely included: Come let us try out the matter. Hast thou never felt her *Mad Blood* frolicking in thine own Veins, and the *Distemper* gotten up into thy *Head* too? How often have the *Felicities* of a *Deity* been presented by Pride upon the *Stage* of thy Fancy? And how brave it would be to drink thy fill of *Nectar* with the Gods? Hast thou never walked with thy Trident as *Neptune*, and commanded the *Sea* to own thy Authority? How many *Rags* of thy Poverty hath *Imagination* dipt into Purple, and hung them up as the Ensigns of thy *Royalty*? How many *Staves* hast thou gilded into *Scepters*, and holden them forth to thy *Subjects* to kiss? What was in the Brain of that *Emperour*, that set him awork to out-thunder *Jupiter*? And what are the dreadful *Claps* of thine *Oaths* and *Blasphemies* but desperate Charges upon God Himself, which none but a perfect *Frantick* would adventure at? What account canst thou give of thy *Time* and *Life* which is lent thee
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but a Moment for Eternity, when that Eternity will be short enough to curse thine own Madness in trifling away *Time*? Art thou fooling still with Feathers and Straws, and idly knitting *Knots* in the *Grot* of thy Misery, when (with thy unhappy Father) thou art thrust out of Paradise, and hast no Acquaintance in that *Holy Court* where once he was so perfect a Favourite, and (which shews thee wholly distracted) thou desirest none? Hast thou seen other *Light* than what hath darkly *glimmered* through the *Windows* of thy Melancholly *Cell*? or other Excellencies than what have *Dazled* thine Eyes in the Glories of *Life*? Art thou priding thy Self in the very Shackles of thy Mournful *Captivity*, and never knewest a greater *Liberty*? Alas! thou art lockt up in *Bedlam* still, and Rovest about in thy Fancy, when as the true *Light*, and *Life*, and *Freedom*, are as far as Heaven from thee? What maketh thee judge of the earnest *Pursuits* of a few here and there after an Invisible Happiness, to be perfect *Weakness* and breach of Discretion; and hast wondred they shou'd look after another Heaven than that thou enjoyest already on Earth? How hast thou preferr'd a *Persian* Devotion that is happy in a *Visible God*, that shines upon his *Votaries* every day! A perfect Stranger to that *Faith* that is the *Evidence of things not seen*: Alas Man! as a dangerous Frantick thou art close shut up in the Dungeon of Unbelief; where thy Brain works upon a thousand *Chimera's*, which evaporate all into Air and Nothing!

Come, let us lay these things to Heart: Is it nothing to thee, that the same Pride which first

infected *Beelzebub the Prince of flies*, hath Blown upon thy Great Mother, and from her have issued those *Swarms*, which overrun her whole Posterity? From this *Serpent* hath come forth a *Cockatrice*, whose fruit is a fiery flying *Serpent* in thine own Bosom. These *Cockatrice Eggs* hatch every day in thine Heart, and break out into ten thousand *Vipers* there: Dost not thou feel them passing in and out as *Wasps* out of an *Hive*; and ready to sting thee to Death? Thy Saviour hath forewarned thee of the killing danger of them, that are all bred in the *Heart*, Mat. 15. 18. *Out of the heart proceed, &c.* They have eaten into thy very Nature, and like *Sampson's Bees*, made their Nest in thy very *Carkass*; and because they yield a *sweetness*, thou lovest to have it so: Unhappy Creature! not knowing with *Jonathan*, that the *Curse* is gone out, and 'tis present *Death* but to dip the top of thy *Rod* and taste of this *Honey*, 1 Sam. 14. 43.

Yes Man, 'tis thine Heart is the *Cage* of the *Unclean birds*, That the very *Stye* of these filthy *Swine*, That the *Habitation* of these *Evil Spirits*: We pity the poor Creature that had a *Legion* within him at once, but hast thou any less? These are they that *Metamorphise* some into *Dogs*, some into *Swine*, others into *Vipers*, the *Jews* into *Serpents*, *Herod* into a *Fox*, *Nero* into a *Lyon*, *Judas* into a *Devil*, and thy Self into all. These have been the *Elames* that have burned into perpetual *Desolations*, turning the whole Earth into a *Field of Blood* and ruinous heaps: When the Son of God appeared from Heaven with design to assuage and allay their Fury,
they

they took Courage and made Head against him, and never ceas'd till they sent him back to complain what an *Hell* he found upon *Earth*.

Indeed these *Canaanites* are left in the Land, to Vex and Trouble the very *Israel* of God (and he sees it best it should be so) for Causes well known to himself; but to grow so Audacious, so far from fearing any *Writ of Ejection* to get them out, that the very *Blind* and *Lame* of them (as those in the Fort of *Zion*) so impudently boast their security, that they laugh at the *Spear* of the fiercest *Opposition*.

These Swarms like the *Egyptian Frogs* so violently invade us, that as Guests (of their own bidding) they make themselves welcome, and will feed on nothing but the very *best in the house*, *Crawling* up and down through every Room of our Souls, and cry you no Mercy, while they creep up with you into the very *Bed-chamber* to take a Lodging with you there.

'Twere some Happiness still, would they forbear the *Chappel*, and withdraw to give us leave to deplore our Captiv'd condition, and to Petition for *Succours* from Heaven; but alas! they rush themselves into the *Divine Presence* too (as *Satan* came once with the Sons of God,) and never fail being at our right hands to resist all the Motions we present for our freedom; like *Jannes* and *Jambres*, by their cursed Enchantments, they would (if possible) invalidate and frustrate the *Embassies* of our Souls to the *King of Glory*, by the distracting *Hisses* of their Raising.

Who is ignorant that they watch all imaginable Advantages to destroy us, and close
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in with *Satan* in all the Contrivances of our Ruine? Nay, the united *Legions* of those *Dark Powers* were inconsiderable and despiseable without them; who must consult to bribe a *Snake* again to tell us Stories of the Gaieties of a *Godhead* and an *Apple*, while themselves are forc'd to attend at a distance, for the uncertain Issue of the *Plot*: Whereas now their business is already done to their hands; and 'tis but conveying their *Tickets* by any Scout to the *Confederates* within, to intimate their Pleasure and Design: When 'tis the very Sport and Recreation of these *Traytors* to bewitch us into a tame and easie *Surrendry* of the *Citadels* of our Safety and Strength, unto the cruel Mercy of *Devils*.

And God knows this is so frequent a Treachery in the World, that it has lost its Observation and Wonder, since it is become but a piece of Honour and Good Nature to commiserate the *Fiends*, and in Civility to give them our Company into *Torment*, while they by the Noise of *Huzza's* and Jollities so deafen our Ears from the Cries of the tormented Conscience or Reason, that we are content to be *Sacrific'd* in a Frolick with them, and scorn to present any cheaper satisfaction for their *Musick*, than the noble Offerings of a *Soul* unto *Molock*; while yet the Agonies of a God, and Tears of Blood streaming from his very heart, have not the least Interest or Influence at all to restrain us from that mad Sally into *Eternal Flames*.

Something might be pleaded for *Moses* and *Paul*, who in passion of Zeal to the Blis of their

their People, so Generously made tender of themselves to be *Victims* of their Peace: And brave *Curius* got a Reputation by galloping into the *Gulph* to appease the angry *Deity* that rag'd in his City. *Cleopatra's* Asp gave her some Pleasure in Death; but to curvet into unquenchable Burnings from the base Sting of a *Tarantula*, and to perish ingloriously for no good or End, but to add Triumph to Hell, and to get the unenvied honour of being prefer'd into the Society of the *Miserable*, is such a Rage of *Frenzy* from the corrupted Blood that an Eternity will never heal.

Nor is this so Strange or Astonishing, since we see every day how arrogantly *Madness* it self does *Ape Innocence* in its greatest Perfection, and (with the *Demoniack* among the Tombs) stalks about as insensible of any Shame or Danger, as ever did *Adam* in Paradise: Nay is more proud of his Cast of *Devils* than He that wore upon him the whole Livery of *Graces*.

Yet might this be soon remitted to it, were the mischief but only to it self, when (alas) there is a *Ferocity* too, that flies in the Face of, and thunders out Death against every *Wight* that is not as perfectly *Frantick* as it self. *Hypocrisie* with all her Disguises must not think to escape the Assault, for it falls upon the bones of the very *Jews*, that dare call on the Name of *Jesus*: And Common Civility hath good Luck, if (with *David's* Messengers) it be sent home but half-shaved, and with bare *Buttocks*.

But one poor torn Leaf of a *Single Psalter* dropt from the Bosom of any Real *Votary* to Heaven

Heaven dispatches him into the Hellish *Inquisition* of its Fury ; where *Piety* is wrack'd (by insufferable Torments) into a forced Confession of the Guilt of that *Heressie* which God himself calls *Glorious Truth* ; and the Flames (whose proper Office is to feed on the *ungodly*) are preternaturally made to devour the *Innocent* : *Pride* her self (thro' the excess of Rage forgetting her State) humbles her self into the meanest Services of the *Kitchen* to make the Fire, and kindle those Fagots which (when she has done her worst) destroy but the *Prison*, and gives liberty to the impassible Soul to ascend as in a *Triumphal Chariot* to Heaven.

O Corruption ! where are the limits of thy *Tyranny* ! Give at least Liberty to the small Numbers of Heaven to Pray for their Enemies, and the Recovery of those thou hast smitten into so perfect a *Blindness* and Obscurity, that in the very loss of *their Eyes* (with the *Sodomites*) they grope about still to perpetrate their *Villany*, and are *feeling* out Subjects for their Malice and Lust, to vent their Spleen and abominable Filth on.

But if blind *Zeal* to the Glory of an *Idol* prevail to such a degree of *Madness*, as to make the *Worshippers* gash themselves, and launce out their own Blood in whole *Streams*, why should we think it so strange, if to gratifie *Devils* and their own senceless Passions they roll and wallow in the *Gore* of others ? So little regret had that *Fratricide* (whom *Hell* set on its first Work) for what he had done, that were the poor *Innocent* alive again, he protests to
God

God himself, that he would not undertake to be his *Keeper*.

And if the *Streams* which *History* shew us to have been shed by the same *Tyranny*, from the Blood of *righteous Abel* to the *Murders* of this Generation, might be suffered to run in one *Channel*, they would doubtless swell into a mighty *Ocean*, wherein the Devils (with the *Swine*, who with their bloody *Tusks* have haunch'd it out) will inevitably one day perish for ever.

Stand here (Reader) on the *shore* of this *Red Sea*, and take a View of the *Wracks* that Sin hath made by its blustering *Tempests*: Wouldest thou have thought that all these *Storms* and *Winds* could have arisen from that *little Cloud* no bigger than a *Mans Hand*? Yes alas, from but a *Mans Hand* (reaching forth after the fatal *Fruit*) hath all this *Mischief* issued, and will ever increase into greater *Destructions*, 'till at last it shall be sent to its own place, where (even then) it will devour it self to *Eternity*.

A Predamnation in the Breast!

A Raging Wound that gives no Rest!

And that calm Peace that once so bless'd

The happy Parents, fled and gone,

To usher in a Legion

Of Deaths and Curses! yet no Sence?

No Sigh? no Tear? no Cryes commence?

(As if all perfect Innocence.)

Presumption! thou greatest Curse

On poor fall'n Man! the fatal Nurse

Of Plagues and Ruine! Heavens Rod!

Depart, and call a Dying God

To

To scourge thee hence, and bring a Flood
Of Tears commixed with his Blood,
To wash the bleeding Wound, and heal
The Ulcers of the general Weal;
That all thy Demoniacks may
Put on their Cloaths and pass away.

THE

THE
 TRAGEDY
 OF THE
 Old World,

With the Prostration due from a little Shrub
 of the Vallies to the stately Cedars of Le-
 banon that flourish on the Mountains of
 Honour, do I humbly bow with this Tra-
 gedie in my Hand, leaving it at their
 Feet, and would they vouchsafe to advance
 it to their Eye, they shall soon discern
 that Men of their own high Rank and Or-
 der, promoted and hastened the Ruine of
 the First World. So influential are the
 Examples of great Ones, that they dragg the
 whole Universe after them. May your
 Honourable Coronets never dash against
 the Bald Pates of the Vile and Ignoble
 on the Waters of Ruine: Nor your Bodies
 be

be Interr'd in the common Grave of a general Desolation, which will be easily prevented by your furnishing those Temples with the Ornaments of Immortality : This will give you the Glory of being the Saviours of the present World ; and the mighty Shields that protect it from the Attraques of Justice and Wrath.

2 P^E T. II. 5.

If God spared not the Old World, &c.

SIN having thus triumph'd in the Ruine of the *Angels*, and torn off the *Crowns* from the Heads of the first *Princes* of the World, leaving that *Infection* in their *Blood* that corrupts the whole *Progeny*, had little else to do but to hang up the *Trophies* of its *Chivalry*, while the whole *Creation* lyes shackled under the Mournful Bonds of its *Tyranny* : The unhappy *Captives* chain'd to its *Chariot Wheels*, are dragg'd into Slavery and Death. Alas ! they never tasted the *sweets* of their *Parents* Freedom and Innocency, and are now content to *Guild* their Fetters, and mistake their Rattling for *Musick*. The *Tyrant* takes care to make them easie and wide, they shall have Liberty enough to frolick and sport themselves (with *Leviathan*) in the large *Ocean* of its bewitching *Empire*, and as Prisoners at large may run the Rounds of all unrestrained Pleasure

Pleasure and Ease, fetching (with *Satan*) their large *Circuits* too and fro, through the whole *Paradise* of Complacencies and Delights.

By such killing *Methods* as these the *Bondage* is confirm'd, and the *Prince of the Air* is so fortunate to find all his easie Laws very naturally obey'd; while the poor *Subjects* grow fond of the *Polity*, and abjuring the Rights of the invisible Kingdom, they swear Allegiance as the hearty Vassals of the present Power, and protest against all Pretence of Homage demanded by another Lord; they grow *Hot* for the usurped *Title*, and will venture Life and Blood for the present *Interest*; they will perish rather than return, and vote themselves to perpetual *Exile* from true Happiness. And 'tis strange to find with what Zeal and Passion they labour to give the most cordial Demonstration of their Voluntary Subjection and Loyalty: With *Cesar's* Souldier they *kill* themselves to bleed out the Mortal Evidences of their *Love*. In short, all its *Interests* are so strongly riveted into their very Constitutions and Nature, that *Obedience runs with their Blood, through every Vein of their Hearts*. Thus are they perfectly miserable, and themselves *love to have it so*; they wear out a Life in paying the constant Tributes of a Devoted Affection to the *Tyrant* that destroys them, and were it possible would spend an *Eternity* in the same Service, and are sorry only that *Death* puts too hasty a *Period* to their dutiful Resolutions: They could be proud to yield Immortal Necks to the pleasing *Yoke*, and with an equal submission Kiss the *Box* that brings the fatal War-

rant for their own *Execution*, and as readily give their *Throats* to the strangling *Cord* whenever the good pleasure of their *Sovereign* shall do them the Honour to command them to dye.

Thus hath the subtle *Serpent* (too successfully) laid the Foundation of an Universal *Monarchy*, and projects to extend its Empire (with *Jesus* himself) from *Sea to Sea*, and from the *River* to the ends of the *Earth* ; and which is yet more deplorable, of this Kingdom there is like to be no *End*, the *Domintion* endureth throughout all generations, and will vigorously flourish till *Time* shall be no more : And no wonder when his *Throne* is establish'd in the very *Bosoms* of his *Slaves*, who reverently bow to the *Idol*, and yield an unquestionable Conformity to all his *Mandates*. Now *David* look to thine own *House* ; the whole *World* is departed, and are listd under the *Banner* of thine *Enemy*, who swells under the proud *Title*, not of a *Prince* only, but a *God*. In vain does *Heaven* menace *Revenge* against those that fancy themselves in security, and are harden'd to the same *Opposition* against all the *Proffers* of *Grace* and *Dreads* of *Power*. The *Difference* is blown to the height of a perfect *Enmity* and a loathing, and *Omnipotence* must set it self to work again, either a *New Creation*, or a total *Destruction*.

The *Apostasy* growing thus *Daring* and *General*, yet to shew that *Mercy* can triumph against *Judgment*, *Divine Grace* breaks into the *Territories* of *Hell*, and powerfully rescues a small *Colony* of the seduced *Traytors* to a reluctant sense of their envassall'd *Estate*, and impatient

patient fighting after their lost Liberty. *Grace* can dissolve the strongest Enchantments that bewitch the Heart, and unfetter the Affections from the woful Chains of Sin and Death.

These rear up *Altars* to God, and with their Sacrifices send up strong Cryes to Heaven for Pardon and Mercy, the rest betake themselves to Lust and Libertinism, and are enflamed with the *Idols* of their own Hearts: Yet no sooner did the first *Penitent* presume to decline the defection, and publickly to make an *Offering* of his Heart with his Oblation to his true Lord, but his own *Brother* becomes his Executioner, he himself is sent a second Sacrifice to Heaven for his happy desertion of the Cursed Interest.

If all the Obligations of *Nature*, and the nearest Relation; if sweetness of *Humour* and endearing *Disposition*; if Fear of a *God*, and dread of *Vengeance* could have had the least Influence on the Conscience of that bloody *Fratricide*; we had not been startled with the amazing News of so early a Martyrdom. But if God shall own him from Heaven by the Flames of *Acceptation*, he may not escape on Earth from the stroaks of *Persecution*: Poor *Abel* falls the Victim of God's Love, his own *Piety*, the Devil's *Malice* and his Brother's *Cruelty*. — This unnatural Murther was a sure *Prognostick* of the Old World's *Tragedy*, since if Sin commence to so high a pitch in its *Infancy* and swadling-cloaths, what *Exploits* may we think will it Achieve in its riper Years, when grown into *Gyant*.

There is nothing hath occasion'd more fatal Events to the World than Quarrels of *Religion*;

while every one pretends to the *Truth*, and none will confess his *Error*; but in the case of these different *Worshippers* God himself had taken the Chair, and signalized the *True* from the *False*, by clear Demonstration from Heaven; yet is Error so far from Conforming it self, and Acquiescing in the Infalible Decision, that instead of submitting to the Holy *Decree*, it flies to *Arms*, and Smites through the *Loins* of *Truth* it self, whose Innocency God is oblig'd to clear up and defend.

The *Fountains* are broken up, and the *Waters* appear already, (which in time shall swell into a mighty Deluge to overwhelm the whole Posterity of the *Murderer* :) The miserable Parents are drowned in a Flood of Tears, which are hardly dried up on the discovery of that happy *Spot of Earth*, which God substitutes to fill up the Vacancy of the Holy *Martyr*: So easily can he baffle the Plots of Hell, in polishing up a new *Pillar* of Righteousness to support his tottering *Church*. 'Twas the brave *Seib*, that started into Life, with the very Lineaments of his Brothers Piety and Goodness upon him; and which afterwards Survive, and Illustriously Shine in the incomparable *Enoch*, the very *Glory* and *Flower* of the Old World; whose Records (though drawn with a sparing Hand and very hasty Pencil, yet shall the Memory of this *Saints* mighty Name and Excellencies be surely Immortaliz'd, (for though others did Vertuously, yet he exceeded them all.) And the Blessed *Pen-man* could not justly pass from Him (whose *History* would have furnished a Volume) when yet he Posts from
other

others with the short Dash of a long Life and a late Death only ; (as if *Eight* or *Nine hundred years* were too little time to ripen them up to any Memorable *Perfection*) but here he stops to transmit the *Memoirs* of the Great *Enoch's* unparallel'd *Life* and miraculous Translation, to all Posterities for evermore.

For if the Treasure of a Pious Education into the Knowledge and Faith of the *Messias* ; If the mighty Effluxes of the Blessed Spirit Hallowing that Knowledge into an unreserved Dedication of his Heart and Life unto God ; If an irradiated Mind, a resigned Will, and right ordered Affections ; If Hatred and Abhorrency of Sin, a valiant Opposition of others Impiety, and a blessed Walking and Communion with the Holy Trinity, be Furniture enough to Adorn and Dress up a *Saint* ; surely all these unitedly met and concentrated in Him. No wonder then, that some whose Eyes are dazled in the Brightness of his Holiness, mistake him for an *Angel* Incarnate, but others more modestly the *Friend* and *Familiar* of God. View him enriched with a *Prophe- tical* Spirit, and the *Eye* of his Soul divinely illuminated to foresee (at the many Thousand years distance) the Glorious Procession of the blessed *Jesus*, with the *Myriads* of his Holy Ones, passing down from Heaven to keep the Great *Assizes* of the *General Judgment*, and to execute *Vengeance* upon all the *Ungodly* of both Worlds, whose *Blasphemous* and *Ungodly* Speeches, whose Profanenesses and *Ungodly* Practices his Chast Soul so heartily abominated, and so passionately lamented, and against which the flaming

Zeal of his Heart issued forth in so constant Menaces of the *Wrath* and *Judgment* that That Fearful Day would bring upon them.

That his *Prophetick* Soul foresaw the *Deluge*, is not to be questioned, since his very Son was a Pillar on whose *Name* that Judgment was very legibly *Inscribed*: And in Truth, an easier *Augury* might Prophesie the Overflowing of *Wrath*, as but the Natural Effect of the Inundation of *Sin*, which in His days (by the unhappy Commixture of the *Two Families*) had spread its contagious Streams over all the World. *History* tells us, that it was his Custom to Congregate the People, in order to the deprecating so direful an Execution: And to assure them, that the World was of no longer *Duration* than the *Life* of his Son; and that whensoever he died, the Bloody *Blow* will come upon them, which answerably happened (for though some say, that the Flood came not till *six years* after *Methuselah's* Death, yet others averr more truly, in the very *same year*; and others again but *seven days*: God it seems giving in that *Week* also, to the *hundred years* allowed for Repentance, but not a day longer; when now after the Decease of this Good *Patriarch*, they might (according to his Fathers *Prediction*) expect the Judgment to fall upon them every hour.

Doubtless the Holiness of *Enoch* (as the very shining of the Sun is a Torment to Sore Eyes) had contracted upon him the General *Odium* of the *Wicked*, but while he laboured under this Burden, and the Danger of their Persecutions, the Almighty God mounts him up into the Secu-
rities

rities of his own Bosom. 'Twas not fit indeed, that the *Phoenix* of the whole *Creation* should be liable to the *Gun-shot* of its Malice: To prevent which, (and lest they should offer Indignity to his Sacred *Dust* after Death,) the very Qualities of his Body, by a sudden and admirable Change, are rendred connatural with those of his Soul: He is all *Spiritual*, and made a fit Inhabitant for the Celestial Kingdom, whose *Translation* hath caused a World of different Opinions; many voting him to be still *Alive*, but cannot agree where to find or where to fix him; whether on Earth or Air, in *Adam's Paradise* or Gods. They tell us he feeds on *Angels Food*, and his very Cloaths are preserv'd from wearing, (as theirs in the Wilderness,) leading a Life of perpetual *Contemplation* and Joy in God, and is reserv'd with *Elias* to the Service of the Confusion of *Antichrist* in the last times: But enough of this.

While the *Eye* of the Soul is Watchful to keep it self *fixt* and *Intent* on the *Beauty* of *Holiness*, that is Ten thousand times enough to compleat up a perfect Happiness to *Angels* and *Men*; Inferior *Suitors* may despair to *Lure* away the Affections that are infinitely delighted in that Ravishing Object, yet no sooner is it averted from the Fountain of Complacencies, but an Army of *Temptations* break in upon it, and offer their several Contributions to patch up a Satisfaction that is only to be found in God. Thus the Unconstant Family of *Serb* (Blessed and secure in their Virgin Love, while they persevered in Fidelity to their first Amours;) Now

alas! (grown weary and tir'd with a *Spiritual* Husband,) employ their Traiterous Senses to cater a-new after fresh *Provisions*, which must fill up the Vacuities of their Squeamish Appetites, when lean *Kids* are dress'd up into *Venison*, and serve well enough to delude the undiscerning Stomach. Thus their *First Father* exchange'd a *God* for a Wife of *Dust*, and mistook an *Apple* for a *Deity*. And these degenerate *Sons of God* (unworthy of that high Relation) while they gaze on the Beauty of the *Daughters of Men*, are bewitch'd to write the Bill of their own *Divorce* from their Chaster Nuptials, to Marry themselves to everlasting Ruine.

The *Ties* of Friendship that long Acquaintance and Familiarity have contracted between Men, have been often so Sacred and Strong, that the Violation of them have occasioned great Commotion of Heart; and can we think that these *Gentlemen* could so chearfully pass from the purer Flames of Divine Love into the Embraces of Vanity, without some Check and *Allay* to the Fury of their hot Desires?

There is something *within* that is ever clamouring for the *true* Interest, and fails not to flash in Hell into the guilty Heart, that makes its Sallies into the *Idolatrous* Bed.

What Communion hath Light with Darknes? Come, call the Sexton, and Toll the Bell, the Church is sick of a fatal Love, and Languisheth under a killing *Disease*, that throws her into Meretricious Arms to Generate a Spurious Brood, whom God will disown for ever.

Is there no Balm in Gilead? No cooling Cordial *Julip* to allswage the Flames of this scorching Distemper, that is like to burn to a total Devastation? Have *Ruby Cheeks* and *Rolling Eyes* those Sorceries in them to Enchant the whole Army of the *Living God* to desert their *General* and leave him, with one poor single Attendant (*thee only Noah have I found Faithful*) to *Levy Forces* where he can, while they Treacherously Bandy to fly to the Enemy, and are marching apace with troling Drums and flying Colours to crouch with their *Universal Ensigns*, and to lay them at the Feet of *Pride* and her cursed Women.

O Treacherous Beauty! the Gift of God, but the Plague of Men, the Friend of Devils, that hast furnished Hell, and art ever laying on Fuel to the unquenchable Fire, which ten thousand *Rivers of Oyl* will never be able to extinguish; were it lawful for me to inveigh against thee, how could I pour out whole *Vials* of Execrations upon thee, while I see the Damning Effects of thy destructive Charms, by which thou transformest Souls into *Swine*!

Had the *Gallants* grounded their *Courtships* on any Pious or Charitable Regard, or consideration had to the desperate and perishing Estate of their Eternal Part (though wrapt up in never so beautiful Skin) or had had the least hopes of endearing these Ladies to the Interests of *Religion*, and to espouse them to God with themselves, the Project had been Innocent and Commendable enough, and Heaven would not have forbid the Ban: But when Gratifying the *Eye*,
and

and Indulging the *Senses* was the utmost Ambition, where Desertion of Himself, and Adhesion to *Idols*, was the certain Consequent: This it was that grieved him to the Heart, and sets him on Councils of Revenge.

The Fatalities of the *Bed* are a Subject so trite, and so very far from being *Merchantable News*, (at this end of the World) that in despair of a *Trade*, they Cry themselves in every Street and Lane, the vast *Folio's* of Ruine arising from unfaitable *Mixtures*, are every where but waste Paper, not answering the Charge of Binding, so that I repine to spend a Sheet upon them, lest I meet it again in every Shop. But sure 'tis a *Tragical Story* to find the Lovely Face of Modest *Piery* bespotted with the *Patches* of Natures Deformity (Snow and Black Ashes pil'd up in an Heap) while She as a cunning *Artist* (ever favouring her own Interest) takes care to *Anneal* the Posterity with the Transcendency of her own *Tincture*, and in short time produces a Generation of *Leopards*, all *Speckled* and *Motley* (like *Jacob's Sheep*.) Behold the fair Morning of a Gracious *Profession*, soon shaded into the Dusk of a declining *Indifferency*, which in a Moment is dipt into the thick *Darkness* of a general *Apostacy*; and that, swelling into monstrous *Impudence* and *Gygantick Ferocity*; *Gods Heritage* becoming to him not only as a *speckled Bird*, but a loathsome *Blackamore*, he is startled (at the sight of it) into a Resolution of taking out the *Rods* from the *Troughs*, and Scourging the *Ring-streaks* out of the World.

The Disease (like the Death that pursued it) being thus Epidimical, the Law of Arms allows the *Renegadoes* no title to the kindness of a *Decimation*, where there were none left to be the Instruments of Execution (unless they be imployed to dispatch one another) therefore Heaven was forced to undertake the Work it self, and the *Rebels* have the Honour of dying by the Hands of a Great God.

But least the *Horror* of so vast a Destruction might cause Trembling in the Breasts of future Ages, who hearing the Extremity of his Justice, might be Affrighted from the Service of so severe a Master, who while he could say little of their Goodness, through the long Series of Ten Generations, yet hath his Wisdom left *Commentaries* large enough, as of his own most gracious Indulgencies and Patience, so a full account of those Aggravations which must justify him for ever from the least Imputations of Injustice or Rigor.

For while the whole *Fountain* of their Souls were so Poison'd, that it was impossible for any Good to issue from them, while the *Leprosie* seizing on every Part, left not a Poor *Angle* Unputrified, whence the least Hope of a Recovery might be grounded, God might indeed forbear them if he pleased, (and glad should they be to be spar'd to their Lusts) but they are so Remote from any Reformation, that they purpose *None*; 'tis least in their Thoughts, while every *Imagination* of their Heart is Evil, and that continually. So Studious and Intent upon their Works of Wickedness, and driving on the Trade of

of Hell, that they laugh at the motion of keeping one poor *Holiday* to God, so that his *Aim* in the Creation was perfectly *frustrate*; for while he made all for his Glory, they detain all from him, nay turn all *against* him, and maintain the War with his own Weapons. 'Twas time to correct the Insolence of such, whom Rebellion and a perfect Contempt of God had blown up to so prodigious a degree of *Profaneness*.

Infirmities and *Indiscretion* may lead us through blindness and Inadvertency (as *Elisha* the Syrians) into the very Streets of Danger and Death, while still, by the Intercession of our good *Prophet* we may be mercifully dealt with, and dismissed in Peace: But *his Life must go for the Life of him*, that shall suffer the *Benhadad* of a final *Impenitency* and *Obduration* to escape, whom God hath appointed to utter *destruction*.

In vain does Wickedness, swelling into the huge dimensions of *Gigantick* Power and *Tyranny*, promise it self *Impunity* from the grapples of Justice, since its own *Moustrousity*, like that of *Goliath*, renders it but the fairer *Mark* for the *sling* of Divine Vengeance to hit, as 'twas but recreation to it, to hale the great *Og* from his *Bed of Iron* into another of *Flames*.

And perhaps this is Noted on purpose, that there were *Gyants* in the Earth, to let us see that (though their *Audacities* hastened the speedier Wrath, yet) they fell but as others, and perished in the same kind of Death with the smallest *Infant*, the *Depths* covering them, and their *weight* but sinking them the sooner, as *Lead to the bottom*.

And

And what Hopes hath any Guilty *Flesh* to please it self in the Dream of *security*, since here we see *Beauty* and *Strength*, fair *Women*, and fierce *Gyants*, walking hand in hand together into the *Chambers of Death*?

And although indeed the general *Corruption* (running into the common-shoar of filth) swell'd it up to a necessity of being washed away by so direful *Inundation*, yet hath *God* mark'd as with a *Black cole* the foreheads of those, whose mighty provocations, made his Heart to ake so, and were no other but the very *Flowers* and *Heads* of the People; to speak plainly, the very *Nobility* and *Gentry* of both the Families of *Seth* and *Cain*, mighty *Men*, and *Men of Renown*.

So usual hath it been for Divine Mercy to pity the sottishnesses of the Rude and Illiterate (unhappy in the want of those advantages of *Education* and *Learning*, which might have refin'd them into the Ingenuities of a generous and reasonable Service) that he hath sometimes spared the greatest *Cities* upon the account of the very *Bruits* that were in them; but still remember, it was then too, when the *Princes* sat in *Sackcloth*, and *Fasted* with them.

God knows, the Authority and Port of *Greatness*, strikes so great an Awe into the Spirits of the *Beasts* of the people, and hath so great an influence upon them, that they dare not be so unmannerly to be more Devout than their *Masters*, and out of fear to spoil the Frolick, merrily venture a *Damnation* with them. Thus the *Blasphemies* of the *Parlour* pass out with the *Dishes* into the *Hall*, and are kept on the Coals for the *Servants*,

vants, to swallow with as great a pleasure and sweetness, as the Meat which was sauc'd with them before. 'Tis a wonder to me, that *Dives* should forget his *Livery-men* in the Prayer that he makes unto *Abraham*.

But anon when the *Cataracts* of Heaven flie open, and *Judgment* appears upon all, Then shall the miserable *Wretches* know, that as they had the confidence to Sin with their Masters, so shall they have the unenvied Honour of Suffering with them.

Mighty Men, and Men of Renown! Come then ye *Mighty*, and evidence the Bravery of your great *Souls*; God is resolved to try the mettle of your Courage. Great Dangers do but edge the noble Steel; the mighty *Alexander* once Triumphed in the Encounter of an *Enemy* that Peer'd his *Spirit*. Shew us now how bravely ye can Bridle the *Clouds*, and setter up the *insulting Waves* that dare be so insolent to invade your Presence, and trip up your Heels. How oft have you boasted of your Valour in your Cups! and breath'd out Thunder from your *Nostrils* against Heaven! How often have you rent the terrible *Majesty* by the frightful claps of your Oaths, and the dire *flashes* of your profaner *Tongues* and Wits! What do your *Spirits* sink now at the Appearance of a *Shower*? Blessed God! wherefore are these so *Renowned*, whose Souls are weaker than *Water*, that are thus dismayed at the insurrection of so common an *Element*? Were these *Mighty Men*, *Valiant* for thy Truth upon *Earth*, and did they take thy part, and Side with thee against the flood of *Impiety* that then overflowed the World?

World? Were they *Knights of the holy Order*, who fought thy Battels, and sacrificed their Blood to thy glorious Interest? Why then is their Name perished, and we have not the *Legends* of their *Chivalry*? But if they were famous for Wickedness, Men Mighty to Oppress, and *Renowned* for Profaneness, Is it so glorious a thing to Brave a God, and Challenge the *Omnipotent* Arm to a Combat? Is the contempt of a *Deity* the Foundation of this great *Coloss*? I plainly find that none shall be losers by thee; Thou wilt give *Atheism* it self the due *Encomium* of its Daring Spirit, that has Courage enough to flie in the Face of thine infinite *Justice* and Power. *Mighty Men, and Men of Renown!* but I fear this is to their little Comfort, when these *mighty* Worms are washed away in the more mighty Waters, and turned all into Slime and Dirt; and thy *Sword* prides it self to be Bath'd in their Blood, while it executes thy pleasure in the devouring such *Mighty* Enemies. *Men of Renown!* God deliver me from the Vanity of a swelling *Tide*, which will little Ease me when in *Hell*.

But would'st thou, that I give a more distinct Account, and produce a *Catalogue* of those particular Sins, that put the Almighty upon such Resolutions of a total defacing the Beauty and Furniture of the whole Earth? Sure they were no *Punie* Ones, no *Peccadillo's*, that could prevail to pour down so great a Ruine. Verily they are with thee, *Reader*, already, in the *Streets* where thou livest; Nay, they are in thee, Closeted up in the *Bosome* thou bearest about thee, at least in *semine*. Take heed therefore they break not out,

out, and force down a shower of Wrath upon thee. And tho' *Moses* hath given us but the small draught of them, and seems but lightly to touch them, yet such were they as never could be forgotten, and are indelibly Engraven upon the Heart of God; so written in Heaven, as it were with a *Sun-beam*, that the blessed *Jesus*, Two thousand years after, brought them down to display them before us; not for Imitation, and to teach us new Arts of *Debauchery*, but for utter detestation, and to Arm us against the Riots that so perfectly destroy them. Tho' still he fears the new World (in the heat of Blood) will be so mad to degenerate into the very same again; for if *Gluttony* and *Drunkenness*, *Lust* and *Obscenity*, *Forgetfulness* of God, and *Mocking* at his *Ministers*, *Scoffing* at our *Noahs*, while they are *Fanatically* building the *Ark* against a Flood that will never come: If *Oppression* of the poor by the mighty *Gyants*, *Unmercifulness* and *Cruelty*, *Contempt* of the *Patience* and *Longsuffering* of Heaven; if all these and a World more, as *Blasphemies* and *Oaths*, &c. which I have not named, Usher'd in by *Pride*, (the Midwife of all Plagues both to *Angels* and *Men*) be not enough to justify the righteous Proceedings of God against them, and to verify the Prophecy of our *Saviour* against our selves, let us wait till the next *Deluge* of Judgment overwhelm us, and then we shall feel how just a God he is to *Sinners*.

Sin was born with a *Sword* in its hand, and hath been a *Murderer* from the beginning; when a *Child*, it slew the World in *Adam*, and all his Posterity by little and little, one after another

but

out now grown to *full Age* it makes nothing (with *Sampson*) to pull down the very *Pillars* of the Houſe, to deſtroy *Worlds*, and to make but one blow of them all.

Original Sin is favourable and kind, it gives Letters of *Licence* for Life, if it be once ſatiſfied, if at all, it ſufficeth ; but open *Prophaneneſs* eggs on Juſtice to take out *Execution* without any *Patience*, like the *unmerciful Servant*, it takes all by the *Throat*, and ſends to *Prifon* without pity.

Yet God who ſometimes cries out of the Burthen, as if unable to ſuſtain it any longer, does here engage his *Patience*, yet to bear up reſolutely under the Load of all this Maſs of *Provocations* ; to let us ſee what *Infinitenefs* can do, and that he delighted as little in their *Blood*, as he did in their *Sin*.

He very well knew, that as ſlender *ſatisfaction* would be made at the end of that Term, as preſently could be, yet becauſe he foreſaw that he had time enough to pay himſelf in the next World ; he valued not the caſting in of *Sixſcore years* and more, which was little to him with whom a *Thouſand* are but as one day.

To live for *Sin* is little Comfort, yet to live for *Puniſhment* is ſurely leſs ; the giving this Term was a *Mercy* from God, but the abuſe of it was

Miſery to themſelves ; he that lives and muſt ſuffer at laſt, were better die ſoon and ſuffer the leſs ; God indeed lent it for *Repentance*, but they improved it for *Sin*, and repented of nothing but that they had ſo *ſhort* a time to *Sin* in, when God knew they had a *long* one to ſuffer in.

Come *Watchman*, *What of the Night? What of the Night?* Why the Fair and long Summers day of the *Old Worlds Goodness* and Pleasures too, is come to an *End*; 'tis perfect *Midnight* with them; *Night, all Night, ever Night*, such a *Night* as shall never see *Morning* more; *Themselves Dark, all Dark, ever Dark*, therefore *Darkness* above is hurl'd into *Darkness* below; *Sin to Sin* here, *Hell to Hell* there; *Carnal Wickednesses*, to *Spiritual Wickednesses*, to *Eternal Wickednesses*: What should *Light* do with *Darkness*, all *Light* with all *Darkness*, ever *Light* with ever *Darkness*? O see the fuel of the devouring *Flames*! *Rottenness*, all *Rottenness*, ever *Rottenness*, irrecoverable *Rottenness*, no sound part in them; *Stubble, dry Stubble*, fully dry, ready for *Burning*. *Vessels of Wrath*, vessels endured with much *Patience*, with *Long-suffering*, with much *Long-suffering*, and now fitted to *Destruction*. What could *Mercy* do more then wait, till of *Good* they became *Evil*, of partly *Good* perfectly *Evil*, and eternally *Evil*, resolved to be so, and yet after this to wait on still, to wait for *Six-score years*; to wait upon a *Wilderness* till it become a *Garden*, upon dead *Sticks* till they *Blossom* and Bear, upon degenerate *Plants* till they should bring forth good *Fruit*, is to little purpose or end; *This Evil* was from *Themselves*, *Wherefore should the Lord wait any longer?*

Art thou gotten into the *Ark* (Reader) are all things ready? Is the door fast shut down? See, *Darkness* is over all the *Earth*, (the *Darkness* of *Sin*) and *Darkness* has covered the *Heavens* (the *Darkness* of *Judgment*.) The *Firmament* hath put on her *Mourning Suit*, and with *Tamerslain* erected

erected the *Black Flag* of despair. *Clouds and Darknefs, and thick Darknefs, and an horrible Tempest is round about; the End, the End is come upon thee; O ungodly World, behold it is come upon thee! See it hastening from the Four corners of Heaven. Now will God Judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompence upon thee all thine Abominations, his Eye will not spare thee, neither will he have pity. Death, Ruine, Judgment, Hell, and Confusion to all Eternity. Ah I will ease me of mine Adversaries— Mercy is gone, clean gone, gone for ever; Compassion fails for evermore. Now look to your selves, Profaneness and Atheism; if you have any Courage shew it now, keep up your huffing Spirit, Snort against Heaven and Goodness, bear up bravely like your selves, don't degenerate from your wonted Bravery. Lord, Gentlemen, Why do ye tremble? What do you mean to turn Colour? Why so ghastly in the Countenance? Why such shivering and Ague in the Joynts? Why so down in the Mouth? Why not a word now? Ladies, What are you so startled at? Why so undress'd to day? Why your Hair so dishevel'd? Where are the Enchanting Curles that Captiv'd so many poor Lovers in them? Where the stately Brow, and the sparkling Eye that struck your Admirers dead? Go, get ye to your Glasses, and view your complexions now. Come, come, clear up, there's no such Fear, be not so Affrighted; 'tis but a Thunder shower, 'twill over again, go get Ready: Oh no! what Noise, what Bustle, what Roaring, what Shreeking, what Yelling, what Fainting, what Bleating, what Bellowing is here! Men, Women, Children, Sheep, Oxen, Wolves,*

Dogs, all howling together in an hideous *Outcry* and the *Waters* out-roaring them all! Oh, oh oh, oh, the Worlds at an End! Our Wickedness has overtaken us, and Judgment is come upon us, it is come, *undone, undone, undone* for ever! You are in the very right of it *Gallants* you are in the very right, it is come indeed, never were you in the right before: Now cry to your Gods to save you, if they can. Did not the Old Man forewarn you of this many a time? Why did ye not take warning, and build *Boats* too? Is he such a *Fool* for securing himself? How often hath he told you of your *Villanies* and *Whoredoms*, your *Ranting* and *Tearing*, your *Haughtiness* and *Huffing*; and to what a fearful end it would bring you? See how he rides securely yonder against all the dreads of Death that are come upon You; now your sport is at an end, farewe *Gyants* and *Ladies*; Adieu for Evermore.

Now here (Alas!) I am at a *Loss*: Can any one Rationally expect, that Invention at the Issues of one Mans Brain, can be Witty enough to delineate the *Face* of an Universal *Confusion*? I have seen, indeed, some Fanciful *Sculptures*, pretending to satisfie the Eye in the dreadful Prospect of some *Climbing* up to the *Tops* of the *Tallest Trees*, while others are hastening to the *loftiest Mountains*; and some (more Brutishly) Mounting on *Beasts* to outride the Destruction that makes but an easie Gulp of the *Horse and his Rider*; every Family yelling in the uppermost *Rooms* of their more Dwarfish *Houses* not one but who betakes himself to groundle and impossible Refuges. Let me present

Read

Reader with a *Table* of the *General Security*, that Fetter'd up the Drowsie World into Fatal *Slumbers*; not the least *Fear* or *Dream* of an Approaching *Tragedy*, but what had been laugh'd out of Life by the *Atheists* of the Age, that admir'd the Frenzy of the Fanatick *Ark*: Each *City*, *County*, *Town*; *Village* and *Hamlet*, as Secure and Thoughtless, as our Selves at this day: Every *Family* busily driving on the daily Trade of *Rebellion* against Heaven, and thinking as little of any *Change*, as those that are past it in the Grave.

The *Ruling Part*, not content to impose the *Iron Mace* of Authority on the *Shoulders* of the *Subjects*, to make them Cringe by a gentle Touch, but fiercely lift it up to fetch a more killing stroke on the tender *Head*, with design to break and make it Bleed, while the poor helpless *Patients* have no Appeal but to their own *Passions*, which vent themselves in bitter *Curses* under all the *Smart* and *Sores* of that fearless Tyranny.

The *Gentry*, (terminating their Delights in a perishing Portion, and Marrying their Souls to the Clod, as if God himself were pleas'd with the Match) are exalted above the *Cares* of Life that Oppress the Hearts of the *Needy*, and the *Fears* of *Want* that afflict them: They *Club* together with those of their *Order*, where they talk of nothing but Hoisting their *Rents*, and Grinding the *Faces* of their miserable *Tenants*; unless for exchange of Discourse they Sally out into Stories of their own *Debauchery*, and ever and anon Jibing at the Melancholy *Noah*, whose *Head* (they think) is troubled with the *Vapours*, while he Builds him-

self into perfect Poverty: Let him go on (say they,) *Experience* at last may make him Wise, when we shall have time enough to *Ridicule* his unparallel'd Folly.

The *Merchants* and *Traffacking Companies* distracting themselves in the *Croud* of their Foreign *Concerns*, are in earnest Expectation of those happy Returns that (they think) cannot fail to Enrich them: The Poor *Mechanicks* Sweating as hotly in the hasty Pursuit of their meaner *Accrements*, and promising themselves a Brisker Trade in the ensuing *Years*. The Laborious *Villagers* Manuring their *Acres* in the confident Hopes of Perpetual *Harvests* (which alas, they will never Reap) and all without the least Eye or dependance on the Blessing of Heaven to Ripen them. *Imaginations* forg'd in every Brain of an endless Prosperity, which they take care to make sure to those *Heirs* which are never likely to *Inherit* it. Courtships are made with as Flagrant Pretences of Love to Young Ladies, (as now) in hopes of Establishing the Families into future Successions of *Honour* and *Estate*, when alas they are rouzed from the Bed of Fondness and Delight, when nothing remains but the Poor *Complicity* of Dying in each others Arms. Projects are contriv'd to Assign Children to this and that Employ, that in greatest Probability may make them *Happy*. The Toiling *Hirelings* are flattering themselves with the hopes of deliverance (into better Services) from the wearisome Tasks they at present Groan under. * The very *Beasts* are fattening up to the Yoke and *Shambles*, when alas they shall never approach to either.

For

For the *Women*, (the Sources of this Plague) their Provocations were so many and Great, that my Pen in despair to number them up, takes the wisest course to let them alone, while their Minds are wholly Immers'd in Vanity, they make up too great a Part of the *Tragedy*, and I leave them to Skreak together at the approach of their Ruines.

O learn hence what the destructive end of Sin is, that hath brought so Tremendous a Perdition on all the World: And if such were the Havock by the Inundation of Water, what will the Streams of Brimstone in Hell do, and what the Flames of the last Conflagration? How terrible is God in his Executions upon Sinners, how Scorching his Justice and Vengeance: Upon the Wicked *He shall rain Snares, Fire and Brimstone, and an horrible Tempest: This shall be the portion of their Cup: Put them in fear, O Lord, that the Nations may know themselves to be but Men!*

They are gone, Reader, and as of all things else that are past, there is nothing remains of so Tragical a Story, but the bare remembrance of it, that hath so weak an Influence upon the Spirits of Men at so remote a distance of time, that it hath lost its operating Virtue and Power, and retains not the least Efficacy to deterr us from the Sin for which they perished. If when the *Earth opening her mouth to swallow up Corah* and all his Confederating Rebels, the surviving *Thousands of Israel* gave a *Screak* only, and returned the very next day to the same *Murmurs* for which They died: Nay, if the very Children of *Noah* had so little sense of it, that while himself

lived, his own Eyes were so unhappy to see them so early revolting into the very Provocations and Idolatries that brought the Flood first upon the World ; How should we hope that our *Selves*, (upon whom the Ends of the present One are come, and which is grown *Old in Wickedness*, and Ripe for a second Destruction) should be affrighted out of our long riveted Lusts from any Reflection of our Minds on so Antiquated a *Tragedy*. Yet hath God Enrolled the Execution in the perpetual *Records*, and sent down his Son to take out a Copy of it, and commanded him to Post it into his own *Journal* to give it a new and a fresher Life, not without hope that it might *Rouze* us a little from our fatal Slumbers, while the Noise and Horrour of the *mighty Waters* should sound in our Ears: Yet doubted it still, while he Prophesies that *Himself* should find us at his *Second Coming* plung'd into as deep Perpetrations as They, and lock'd up under as perfect Insensibility of our Approaching Ruine, from which nothing could awaken us but the surprising *Trumpet* of an *Arch-angel*, alarming us to Judgment and the Everlasting Doom: For as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the day of the Son of Man: They did eat, they drank, they married Wives, they were given in Marriage, until the day that Noah entred into the Ark, and the Flood came and destroyed them all.

But what is become of Prides Kingdom now? When (with the Great *Darius*) she is flown and hath left all the Rich Plunder of her stately and Golden Tents to the Spoil of the *Conquerour*: Alas, she has no pity for so many slaughtered *Carkasses*;

Carkasses; thrown over into the *Ocean of Ruine*! Nor is it so much her Care to *Protect*, as to *Betray* her unhappy Subjects: She delights not so much in their Safety as Destruction; she Dresses them up only for Sacrifice, and they have the Pleasure to dye in their *Holiday*. Cloaths: She Combs their Heads, and Shaves their Beards, and Smooths up their rivelled Cheeks, to expire, (with *Octavius*) and lays them asleep on gentle Pillows: She Courts them (with *Jael*) to come in to her, and hides them from the Danger of others; but then the *Nail* and the *Hammer* is in her own Hand, which Pins them fast to the *Earth*: With *Alexander* she hunts out more Worlds for them to Conquer, and with the desperate *Pharaoh* leads them into the very Bowels of the *Sea*: See how she drives them into Corners; first out of *Heaven*, then out of *Paradise*, and now out of the *World*: She is the Devils Spirit, employ'd to furnish Inhabitants for the lower *Region* to an eternal Slavery. Behold where she Perks on the Prow of *Noah's Ship*, where she Splits her very sides with Laughter, at the Glorious Present she has made to *Lucifer*! What a World of Furniture hath she boarded away at once for his Spacious *Palace*! How will his stately Rooms be hung with the *Tapistries* of *Prides Tragedies*! What Horrid Stories will they represent of her Cruel *Tyrannies*! And here she waits to drop her *Cockatrices Eggs*, which she knows will Hatch themselves within the very *Ark* into another Brood for her. She thinks not her Case so desperate yet, as not to hope she has a Friend in the very *Council of*
Eight

Eight. One that has Courage enough to own
her Principles, and doubts not in a little time
to grow up into Power and Strength enough,
advantageously to declare for her Interest.

*Men of Renown Dash'd out of Breath!
Gigantick Huffs, yet Pump'd to Death!
O Baffling Heaven! Mighty Mountains,
Tumbled into swelling Fountains,
Lye sprawling there, (Trophies of strength
Divine) whose Massy Weight and Length
Makes Justice smile! A Righteous God
Reducing all to Dust and Clod:
Chaos and Carcasses, O Sin!
Now Dismal have thy Ruins bin?
Tremble ye mighty Gods of Earth,
Here God's as Great as you want Breath.
O for an Ark of Safety now!
Come in, come in, and Lowly Bow.*

The Impiety of Cham.

TH E proud Waters that had received their Commission from the King of Heaven to Fight his Battel, and revenge his Quarrel against the universal Apostacy, (with more Faithfulness than *Saul* who in pity spared the delicate *Agag*, and the best of the Cattel for Sacrifice) undertaking the General *Massacre*, without Mercy, (Proud of an opportunity to Muster up all their strength, and by this Execution, to Chronicle the Eternal Victory over all their opposite Elements) pour'd out all their *Forces* with such a Torrent of Fury and Rage, that soon did the poor baffled *Flames* Sacrifice themselves for fear, and lie all Martyr'd in their own Ashes: Not a *Spark* left in the whole World, but what must be fetcht from Heaven to warm *Noah's* Altar. The *Air* (guilty of the Treason too, for yielding Breath to such a Rebellious crew) is all smother'd to Death within the *Concaves* of the Spiring World. But the poor *Earth* for the Guilt of bearing this unhappy Burden, and Feasting them with all her Luxurious Prodigalities (with *Cesar*) muffles her Face in her Mantle, and patiently receives the Wounds of her own folly, while the insulting Enemy (not content to ride upon her *Back* only) tramples her under his Feet, and is trod into Mire and Dirt. Whose cruel Tyrannies when the All-gracious God perceived, and now that these insolent Waves,

Waves, *help'd forward the Affliction* of his poor little Church in the Ark, (crowded among Brutes and very uneasy) commands them to go back, *It is enough, stay now your hand.* But while they hardly retire, and with too slow a pace, a mighty *Wind* is sent forth to *sound the Retreat*, and enforce them to a speedier conformity; that so the Creator might conferr a New World on those his *favourites*, who had alone been so Loyal and Faithful to him in the Old.

The Commission is Executed, and the good *Prophet* hopes that this *Wind* has blown him some good, while the obedient *Surges* post so fast away to their *Quarters*, and that neither *Wind* nor *Water* had done him hitherto the least prejudice in their several *Marches*.

How submissively doth he wait till he receives the glad Tydings of the Recession of the *Enemy*, which is confirmed to him by his winged *Ambassadour* under seal (with the Signature of an *Olive Branch*.) And that Patience might *have its perfect work*; he still attends and dares not set a Foot on the Earth without receiving orders from Heaven.

But now, behold this poor despised *Preacher* of the Old World, comes ashore from his dark *Cabin*, and lands the great *Monarch* of the *Universe* (a Type of the greater Sayiour) the *Prophet*, *Priest*, and *King* over all the Earth: whose first work is to build an *Altar*, whereon he Sacrifices his very Soul in Praises and Thanksgivings to God, the *Perfume* of which was so sweet in his Nostrils, that it brought down a blessing not on Himself only, but on all the Earth to all Generations; for
while

while *Seed-time* and *Harvest*, *Summer* and *Winter*, *Day* and *Night* continue unto us, we cannot be unmindful of holy *Noah's* Sacrifice, which was so pleasing to God, that to him was sealed the Confirmation of them all to us.

Yet could not all the *Floods* of Wrath extinguish the rage of that Venom which his Impious Son *Cham* translated from the Old World into the New, and had lodged in his Heart (all this while) like a close *Traytor* in the very Bosome of the *Church*: A *Contagion* which will spread it self to that *Latitude*, as in a few years shall over-run the Earth again. This was the cursed *Stock*, out of which shall sprout those venomous *Branches*, which shall dilate themselves into a prodigious *Plantation* for the increase of *Wickedness*.

He was a fellow of so vile a Spirit, that you might have found all the *Rudenesses* of the past World concentred in him. And while he wants other opportunities to manifest the Villanies of his Heart, he blushes not to act them against his own *Father*; so devoyd was he of that common Grace and reverend Respect, which every *Pagan* Conscience payes to the Maintenance of the Honour of *Soveraignty*; so insensible was he of that Duty, which as a Natural Tribute is due to so great a *Prince*, and so good a *Parent*; that he is not afraid of the Vengeance of Heaven, while he belches out the *Cryduries* of his rotten Lungs, upon his venerable Face, by open Derision and prophane Contempt of that glorious *Person*, (now a Prisoner in the surprizing Snares of his own *Vines*, whose uncivil *Twiggs* had

had caught him by the Heels, and ruffled off his *Mantle* from him in the fall.) Unhappy Prince ! to give so vile a Miscreant occasion of so Rebellious an Affront to thy Majesty. But most worthily Accursed *Wretch*, that wer't so far from casting the Veil of *Duty* and *Charity* over that naked Bosom, wherein lodged an *Heart*, so lately, by the Righteous Judge of Heaven, pronounc'd to be the very Best and most Sincere in all the World : That here I find thee taking up the perfect Postures of a *Mad-man*, extending thy widened *Throat* into loud Exclamations of Laughter and Derision, to the insufferable dishonour of that mournful Object. Nor canst thou be satisfied in ridiculing thine own *Father*, in the presence of the All-seeing *God* and his *Angels*, but must maliciously summon all the *World* to do it too ; how righteously therefore wer't thou and thy whole Posterity, bound up in the strong Chains of an Eternal Curse !

The *Infirmities* of our Fathers (either Civil or Natural) should be so far from causing us to draw a wry Mouth, that they must be ever the subject of our aking Hearts ; Since the Fathers eating sowre Grapes, do but cause the Childrens Teeth to be set on Edge. And who is Ignorant that *Noah's* Wine did but exhilarate his Spirit into a more chearful pronouncing the dreadful *Imprecation* upon that Son, whom the doom of Heaven had before decreed to be blasted. Sure I am, those *Israelites* had forfeited their own Heads before ever God gave way to Satan to Tempt *David* to Poll them ; and *Absalom's* hot Brain did but naturally generate those long *Locks* which Divine Justice

Justice twist'd into an Halter to hang him with,
for the short Cutt of his Curtail'd Obedience
to so good a Father.

'Tis but *Turkish* Impiety, to reck our Revenges
against the Plagues of Heaven that Sin hath
procured, upon the very *Bodies* of our *Kings*.

'Tis remarkable, that most of the *Rebellions*
which Sacred *Writ* hath acquainted us with,
were rais'd against the best *Princes*, and the very
Intimates of God, whose *Interēst* for divine As-
sistance was so apparent, that 'twas a Miracle,
Passion should so besott men into the fatal Ef-
fects that pursu'd them all: Since *Corah's* Grave
was so affrightfull, as might well allay the rage
of that *Spirit* to this day.

Tho *Zimri* slew his Master (that was but a
Sott) yet a *Jezabel* could observe, that he suf-
fered the Plagues of a *Regicide*, and the Pleasure
of a *Weeks* Reign was soon expired in the Flames
of his expeditious Ruine, when despair of Safe-
ty from the Prosecutors of that Treason reduc'd
him to that wofull Exigency of Offering up him-
self (a most unacceptable *Holocaust*) in the Fire
of his own Kindling.

'Tis the Kindness of God to all *Subjects* in
acquainting them, that the *Hearts of Kings* are
in his own hand; directing them by that disco-
very into the safest Methods of Redress against
any the wildest Exorbitances of *Tyranny*: Since
'tis but their Addressing unto himself who is able
to turn them (as the *Water-streams*) to flow into
as great *Currents* of Favour and Kindness to-
wards us, as ever they have ebb'd in the dimi-
nution of any Rights or Liberties from us. If
their

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their own Prayers can redress their Conditions, 'twere but Madness to fly upon the Faces of Princes (*whose Wrath is as the roaring of Lyons*) when speedier succour may be drawn by humbling themselves into the Arms of a gracious God; *Who for the Oppression of the poor, and for the sighing of the Needy, will surely arise to set them in safety from every one that puffeth at them.*

Be it ever remembred, That God hath secured the Prerogative of *Honour* to all our *Superiours*; with the same Care as he hath provided for the *Lives* of other Men; to shew us, That 'tis as dangerous to withdraw our *Allegiance* from them, as to act *Murder* upon others: And that their *Sovereignty* is as safely guarded as our own *Beings*.

And Oh! that the Brightness of those *Eyes* that sparkle Terror into the Hearts of the Wicked, and scatters them *as the Clouds before the Sun*, may reflect so great a *Light* into all the Paths of Princes, that their Royal Feet may never slip into *Noah's Noose*, nor any of those more vulgar Weaknesses which give Opportunity for *Chamish* Impiety to set light by that Majesty which God hath made the very *Image* of his *Own*.

And let Undutiful Children take care, that the Stones of *Abfalom's Heap* (which Travellers say are still increased by very *Jews* and *Turks* passing by it, in detestation of that unnatural Act) be not brought hence by Divine *Justice*, to beat out the Brains of those whom the Horreur of so notorious an Example can little affright into better Obedience! the Punishment of this Crime being

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ing so seldom *Prorogued* to the *General Assize*, as Vengeance hardly takes a *Nap* before *Execution* be done to the full. When a wretched Son was once laying violent Hands on his Aged Father, and kicking him out of doors; "Now hold thy Hands, (said the Old Man) for 'twas but *hitherto* that I served thy *Grandfather* in the very same Manner.

And 'tis observable, that the Curse is entail'd expressly upon *Canaan* for the Sin that was committed by his Father, to let us see how so great a *Profaneness* is seldom expiated but by the Blood of Generations: And God's withholding his Grace only from Children, is *Slip* enough to strangle them with the same Halter their *Fathers* hung in.

This is that *Canaan* whose Name gave Denomination to the *Fruitful-land*, and whose *Sin* made it yet but a *Wilderness* to his whole Posterity; since the Blessing of Exuberance is but a *Curse* to those to whom common *Mercy* is but a constant *Judgment*; and God did but send them before-hand as a Company of *Slaves*, to build those Houses, and plant those Vineyards which should cheer the Hearts of the more obedient Children of *Shem*; to whose use God sealed the Lease of their *Ejectment*, and delivered it to *Abraham* (so weary was he of such Tenants) four hundred Years before it was Executed, while in the mean time a People should be born that should serve the Lord, and Pay him the *Quit-Rent* of Praise for so pleasant Habitation.

And what! Is not this another Tragedy, when the Sword of God strikes inwardly, and

executes its Massacres upon all the invisible Faculties ; kills them *spiritually*, and spares the poor *Corps* to the Curse of Slavery, not to *Men* only, but *Lusts* and *Hell* ; leaving them so perfectly *Dead* from performing the Functions of the *true Life*, that they are absolutely fenceless of any other end than that of *Luxury* ; wherefore they are continued in the World, 'till running up and down for a while (like *Swine* with the fatal Knife sticking in their Throats) they faint away and bleed themselves into Eternal Death, as *Vessels of Wrath fitted for Destruction*.

Canaan Adieu ! (the unhappy Son of so prophane a Father) who hath entail'd upon thee and thine so direful Execration, that I see some of thy Cursed *Off-spring* hypocritically crouching with their *mouldy Bread* and *clouted Shooes*, to begg a miserable Life from the flourishing *Family* of thy more dutiful *Unkle*, and none other is granted them but such as is worse than *Death* it self, when, rather than perish, they are content to become the contemptible *Skullions* of their *Kitchen*, the Prophesied Judgment is actually verified, *Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be.*

Babel's Tragedy,

To the City of God (if any on Earth be) the Incomparable London, (Instructed and Edified on Everlasting Foundations into all the Dimensions of Saving Knowledge, Faith, Love, Truth and holy Experience, by the Care, Skill and Industry of Her Spiritual Builders) do I humbly Dedicate this Tragedy. Beseeching God that neither the Clattering of Tongues, nor the Division of Hearts may ever procure Her the Baffle of Babel: But that she may be a City at Unity in it Self; her Affections as uniform and Compact as her Habitations, ever remembering that she is not Secure, till God himself lay her Topstone in Heaven, and Finish her up to Perfection.

GEN. XI. 4.

Go to, let us Build, &c.

BUT come Reader, Let us pass from Golgotha, (the Charnel-house of Dead Bones and Skulls,) while we divert our selves a

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little

Glory; who once said to the Great *Abraham*, (aid in him to thee too,) *Fear not, for I am thy Shield.*

And this *Shield* is a *Sun* too, that will ripen all the fruits of his *Bounty*, by which thy *Table* is spread. Thou shalt not need Crouch to a *Sodomite* for a piece of *Bread*: How deservedly did he wear the Leprosie of a *Naaman* upon his own Skin, that could steal from the Presence of his great Master to post after an *Assyrian*, for a little Silver and a few Changes of Raiment! 'Tis below the Princes of the Blood to court the Skullions of the Kitchen for Scraps: These, whose Spirits are feasted every day with *Hidden Manna*, need little question their daily Provisions, which flow in upon them from the less Expensive *Current* of Providence. *Jacob* may send into *Egypt* for Corn, but he shall send his own full *Bags* to pay for it: And if *David* solicits a *Nabal*, for a part of his *Sheep-sheer* Cheer, 'twas but in order to the design of God to translate his whole Estate upon him with his *Wife*. *Abraham's* Children have *Milk* and *Honey* in their own *Canaan*; and if they had less, yet is their *Dinner of Herbs* better than the stalled *Ox* of the *Wicked*. The very Gleanings of *Ephraim* are better than the Vintage of *Abiezar*: And he that sups with *Herod* may chance disgorge his *Stomach* when he finds the Head of a *Prophet* brought up in a Charger for second Course; even of that *Prophet*, who to avoid the dangers of their poysonous Dishes, contents himself with the *Locusts* of the Wilderness. The Great *Elijah* can trust his Master to Cater for him by the Ministry of *Ravens*, and when that fails, is satisfied with the poor fare of a *Widow*, rather than

then to Glut himself (with Jezebel's Chaplains) upon the Varieties of her providing. His brave Successour, with all his Colledge, are thankful to God for a Mess of *Portage*: And the patient *Habakkuk* can joyfully feed on a God alone; tho the *Fields* and *Herd*s and *Stalls* should afford him not a *Foynt* to supply his Table. These with their Great Lord eat *Meat to eat which the World knew not*. So had the Children of the *Captivity*, who chose rather to make their Meals on *Pulse* and *Water*, than to defile themselves with the princely *Viands* of the Royal Board. The holy *David* fears to be *choaked* with them: *Let me not eat of their dainties*. With an holy disdain have all the best Children of *Abraham* declined the dangerous Accession of earthly Superfluities: Let the *Swine* of the World (who offer to no other Deity but their Bellies) swallow themselves till they break again. *All their fresh Springs are in God*. And though *Esau* said he had enough, and wanted not *Jacob's* Presents; yet had he little enough who wanted *Jacob's* God. Let the true Children of *Abraham*, learn to take out the lesson of Generosity from him, and to wind up all their desires in God, who (abstracted from all Creatures) will very shortly be their only Portion, and themselves shall be for ever filled with *his fulness, who filleth all in all*. Let them give no occasion to any *Sodomite* of the Earth, to suspect that they worship a God who is a Niggardly Rewarder of his Servants; and are therefore forced to sneak to them for *mouldy bread*, and *clouted Shoes*.

But sit down for a while, and consider, (Reader)

der) what mean these Golden Words, *I am thy exceeding Great Reward* : When all the *Great Ones* of the World have the Plague of the Serpent upon them, and lick the dust of the Earth, and terminate their desires in a Cursed Portion ; to thee will I give my *self* for an Heritage ! And could thy shallow Apprehensions conceive what a God is in himself, or can be, and do for his faithful Servants, thou mightest then reach the Dimensions of that Blessing, which because they are so infinitely beyond all the strength of thy Faculties to comprehend, therefore have I provided an *Eternity* for thee, wherein I will enlarge those Powers of thy Soul to a sweet and ravishing Contemplation of all my Perfections, and thine own exceeding Happiness in having an Interest in them, when thou shalt more perfectly see the Happiness of that Enjoyment, and more fully know what infinite Wisdom, Power and Love can effect, when they lay out themselves in Contrivances of all possible Felicity and Blessedness, to all the Objects of my Favour and Grace : And if I design this Happiness for thee to Eternity, thou canst not fear that I should be defective to thee in this life, but even now will crown all thy faithful Services with Rewards and Encouragements due to them. *Thy works of Faith and Righteousness*, shall be present *Peace and Comfort*, and the *effects of that Righteousness, quietness and Assurance for ever*. And what is there, Reader, that the utmost desire of thy Ambitious Heart can reach out to to covet after, but what *Abraham's God* can as bountifully conferr upon thee, hadst thou the least degree

degree of his Faith to believe it? It is He that can make thee *ride upon the High places of the Earth*, and open to thee all the rich Exchequers of his Treasure, that thou shalt not need Crouch to *Kings*. He can platt a *Coronet* of Honour for thy Temples, and give thee a Name like unto the *Name of the Great Men of the Earth*. Who promoted the poor *Shepherd* from waiting on those *few Sheep in the Wilderness*, to become the glorious *Head* and *Pastour* of his People? Who called the despicable *Fishermen* from their *Boats* and *Nets*, to be *Spiritual Princes in all the Earth*, and set them as glittering *Suns* to shine for ever in the Firmament of his Church? He can prepare a *Table* for thee even here in the *Desart*, that shall baffle all the *Elixirs* of the Field and the *Vintage*: Can give thee a *Taste* of that *Manna* the *Spirits of Angels* are feasted with: Can whisper *Secrets* into thine Ears, that shall drown thy heart with *Joy unspeakable* and *Glorious*: Can light up such a *Taper* in thy *Soul*, that shall pierce the *Clouds*, and give thee a *Prospect* of the *Invisible Kingdom*, and bless thy *Soul* with *Moses's Eyes*: When all the *World* is tossed on the *Billows* of his *Wrath*, can lodge thee in an *Ark* of perfect *Security* and *Peace*. Thou shalt not *fear the fears of the Wicked*, nor be *distracted with their Amazements*: Thy *Soul* shall dwell in quiet within the *Tabernacle* of his *Presence*: If *Heaven* and *Earth* should fall and mix together in one *Chaos* of *Confusion*, the *Ruine* should not concern thee at all: Thy *Foot* is fixt on the *unmoveable Rock* from all the *Dreads* and *Possibilities*

sibilities of falling : *Everlasting Arms* would be underneath, to preserve thee from *dashing thy self* against the bruising Stones. When Time hath spun out the Silver Thread of thy Life on Earth, God will furnish thee with a *Clew* that shall convey thee safely thro' all the *Labyrinths* of Death, into the lightsome Palace of an everlasting Joy and Glory ; where thou shalt ever share with his Chosen in endless Felicities, and wear on thy happy Head the Immortal *Crown of Life*. God from his own most blessed Essence flowing out unto thee with inexhaustible streams of ineffable Pleasure and Love, which drown all apprehensions here to conceive, and must despair ever to know, before thou comest to enjoy them : Lo ! this is the Reward and *Heritage* of the faithful Children of that *Abraham*, whom God made the happy Object of his *own delight*, his Friends Joy, his Enemies *Envy*, and the *Wonder* of all the World.

Cease then from inquiring what an exceeding Great Reward thy God will be to those that serve him with *Abraham's Heart* : Nor ask with *David*, *What shall be done to the man* that shall fight the Battels of God, against the *Goliath's* of the World, and Sin ; but buckle on thine Armour, and with *Abraham* and *David* act Couragiously ; and in the Strength of thine Almighty Shield thou shalt not fail to be Victorious ; the little *Pebble* of this single Promise, shot from the strong Arm of thy Faith and Confidence, shall *sink* into the *Forehead* of all thine Opposers, on whose Ruines thou shalt build to thy self a *Pillar* and Monument of Immortal Glory and Praise.

Thou

Thou wilt pardon me, Reader, this long digression from *Abraham's* Story, while I have been labouring only to heave up thy dull heart and tired Spirits, to that blessed place where himself is entred, and to give thee (in a smaller draught) an imperfect *Copy* of those Glories, to which his Faith and Courage have so happily preferr'd him. We shall find him presently making use of his *Shield*, and trying what metal it is made of, not against a weak Combination of Kings, but against God himself. Indeed the manner of his *Attacque* is somewhat different, for there is no prevailing against God but by an humble use of his own Weapons: Therefore having received the Ammunition, he immediately makes his Assault, and so very luckily managed it, that it struck into the very Heart of God, and thence fetch'd out the blood that was afterwards temper'd to make up the Son which he fought for. *When fury and Wrath can prevail nothing, Tears and Prayers get the Victory.* Hast thou said, thou wilt be a *Great Reward* to me? to what purpose will all that be, when I am hastening to my Grave, and cannot bear with me thy Blessings into the next World, and I have no Heir to enjoy them after me? — *Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go Childless?* See how *Abraham* strikes while the Iron is hot; and dexterously clinches the Nail of the Promise, with the humble stroak of his Faith into the breast of God's Faithfulness, which opens it Self to make way for it to stick in; and there it abode for many years after, till *Isaac* came to draw it out. 'Tis observed (by the Learned)

Learned) that *Abraham* (*) *Sigh'd* out this Request to God from the very bottom of his Heart, which no wonder then had so good effect on the Heart of God. The weak Charge of the Lips do little Execution, without strong Enforcement from the Breath of the Soul. *Omnipotence* it self falls under the *Push* of a melted Soul. The Wind of Affectionate Prayer, and Showers of true Repentance, turns the very Bowels of a God within him, and puts him on Repenting too. *Mary's* Tears at *Lazarus's* Grave, sets *Jesus* on Groaning, and then to Weeping as fast as She: Admire not to see the Soul of her Brother discharged out of Heaven, when God could keep it there no longer. The Spiritual Kingdom is very well pleased, to suffer under such *Violence*. It may be *Jacob* afterwards learned from his *Grandfather* this Never-failing Art of Wrestling with Heaven, for in his buckling with the *Angel*, though himself got a small blow (that put his *Thigh* out of joyn,) yet had he Strength enough still to hold him *Prisoner* till he got his Designs upon him, and his *Tears* trickled down so fast, that there was no more Heart in his *Antagonist* to deny him that *Blessing* that he so powerfully struggled for. As a *Prince* he prevailed with God: But how? He wept and made *Supplication* unto him. They were *Jacob's* Tears that melted the strength of that Blessed *Prince* of *Angels*, who when he came into the World in our Nature, made use himself of no other Arms.

(*) *Domine Jehovab, illud patheticum est eoque, tanquam singul-tiens usus est Abraham,*

But what are *Sighs* and *Groans* and *Tears* (were they all of Blood) for how little are they regarded in the World? Since they make the poor Patients but the more unpleasing Company to others who breath in the *Egyptian Air*, where no such Showers fall, where no such Winds do blow? Yet *Sighs* for Sin differ from other *Breath*, as the Sweet Perfumes of the *Aromatick Mountains* from the Fuliginous Vapours of the dead Sea, or the Inspirations of Heaven from the Noisom Belchings of Brutes: They are the Brisk Gales that scatter the Fogs of Guilt, and securely waft us to Heaven. And though they are Inarticulate, and pass away from us without a *Coinage* into Noise and Words, yet God knows their Oratory well enough, and can spell them into so good Sense, that he puts his own *Imprimatur* upon them, and shall be produc'd as *Records* of true Repentance, though there be little else to plead for Mercy and Safety in the day of Visitation, but the poor Evidence of a few Hearty *Groans* under the killing Tyrannies of Sin. When the *Bottle* of Tears shall appear at that time to plead for us, then shall these *Winds* also pass out of their Treasury, to blow some Refreshment on us: Both the one and the other Washed and Sweetned with the Sacrifice of the Blood of *Jesus*, *Ezek. 9. 4.*

God had already made to *Abraham* a General Promise of a Numerous *Seed*, and now he *Sighs* to have that Promise more particularly express'd. *Generals* in Religion leave the Affections Dull and Cold, and are but as the *Embers* upon the *Hearth*, which more explicite Revelation blows up into Flames of Spiritual Heat and Joy. All the rich

Legacies

Legacies of the New Testament do but meanly Affect us, till they are translated into the Heart by the Finger of God. Then, *O how I love thy Law!* 'Twill never be well with us till we Pray and Sigh too, with *Abraham*, for a more express Illumination and accomplishment of the Promise: *I will write my Law in their inward parts.* General Promises satisfy (well enough) a dead and General Faith, all whose Hopes are on the *Paper*, but a Lively Faith is ever Restless till they be transcribed thence, and engraven in legible Characters within. *The Law of his God is in his heart.* That is the *Fleishly Table* upon which it is fairly written. Salvation is secure to all whose *Names are written in the Book of Life*; but 'tis a *Lamp* from the *Sanctuary*, (the *Spirit of Revelation*) that must clear up the Evidence to the Soul of its own *Name* being there inserted. *Abraham's* true Faith Sighs after more explicate *Demonstration*. 'Tis a dreadful thing to leave the Concerns of Eternity under Fear and Doubts. *Give all diligence to make your Calling and Election sure.* *Abraham's* Soul was at stake, and longed till he were better secured of the promised Seed which should make himself and all the *Nations of the earth* happy. He Pants (*) till he see that natural Root from whence the Blessed *Branch of Righteousness* should in Gods good time be most happily derived. What could he beg less than this? In vain would all other Blessings

(*) *Quotnam donum oblectationi aut consolationi mihi erit, quatinus non video promissionem tuam completam de semine meo ex quo Messias est procreandus?*

be heap'd on his Head. But to pass down into the *Chambers of death Childless*, and all the *Memoirs* of his Faith and Obedience to be buried with him in the same Sepulchre: This is matter of Grief to him, under all the Royal Largesses of Divine Bounty towards him. *Progeny is the natural desire of Man*, whose Ambition is to see himself survive in others springing from him; and Children are but the living Images of their deceased Parents, who (so long as They live,) are not altogether dead. Besides *Abraham* foresees his great Name might be interred in *Oblivion*, if God should not inscribe it on a more lively *Monument* than his *Steward Eliezer of Damascus* was like to make; who although he were a good Man, and by being adopted his Heir, might be raised to bear some Figure and Resemblance of his State in the World; yet (he fears) he would prove but a dark *Representative* of the Great *Abraham's* Spirit, and no *Express Image* of his Masters Person: Too dark a *Region* for his Illustrious Vertues to shine in.

The Sence of this Infelicity lay so heavy upon his troubled Spirits, that now he fights for *Life*, and reduplicates his stroaks. The Rock had not yet yielded him one comfortable *Drop*, which in an instant shall gush out in *Floods of living Water*; he renews the complaint, and piteously laments his condition. *To me hast thou given no Seed*. None yet appears, though thou tellest me of a numberless One. I find no Accomplishment of thy Promise. God sometimes makes as if he did not hear, and seems to shut his Ears, while yet his Heart is open. He loves to put a Value on
his

his own Mercies, which we so much the more esteem, as they cost us dear in purchasing and waiting for. *Blessings too cheaply gotten, are too meanly priz'd.* Abraham's Soul is in Travel for an Heir, he must not hope to be delivered by one poor single *Pang*. In vain do we knock at Heavens Gates, without watching there till Answer comes; and if that be delayed, our Requests are to be enforced by new Arguments, and more pathetick workings of Heart. And though our Prayers be answered before we cry, yet must we call again and again for that Answer. And *Jesus taught us a Parable to this end, that we ought always to pray, and not to faint*: Let Abraham hold out but one throw more, and the Child shall come to the Birth. Christian! thou hast been in long Labour for a Saviour, the next Groan may bring him from the Womb of Gods Decree, and thine own Prayers into thy joyful Arms: wilt thou dye before thou see thy Saviour Born in thy Heart? *Christ in thee, the hope of Glory.*

Behold God this very Moment appearing to cancel all the *Evidences* of the *Strangers* Pretensions, and breaking for ever the Heart of *Eliezer's* Hopes: See the Seals of those despairing Conveyances, making over thine Estate and Soul to the *Forreigner*, all lying on the Ground torn off, and himself sneaking away in utter Desperation, at the first breaking out of the true *Isaac*. Go Father Abraham, and teach all the World the profit of patient waiting at the Throne of Grace, for by thine *Importunity* and *Perseverance* hast thou prevailed with God. Since the pains of thine Heart have turned even Gods within him, and
caused

caused his very Bowels to roll, in the *Sounding* whereof thou hearest the joyful Tidings of a Son, which shall issue from those very Bowels that have stirred in so violent Motions, against which his pity hath no strength any longer to withstand thee; and hath all this while made but a feigned Resistance, while thou hast been shewing a *Tryal of thy Skill*, how well thou canst manage thy *Shield*, and how prosperously God himself may be attack'd, when it shall please him to yield up himself to be conquered by his *Creature*.

Abraham hath been in Travel, and Behold a Troop cometh. What a prolifick Grace is Prayer, which brings forth Thousands and ten Thousands in our Streets; and makes Parents of an Incomprehensible Seed. The Off-spring of that Grace, are all the Innumerable Productions of Eternity, which all the Arts of *Arithmetick* must for ever despair to sum up. Can the Great God give any thing little? Hath *Abraham* wrought all this while but for one Son? Come all ye glittering *Lamps of Heaven*, your mighty Creator sends you a Summons to make your Appearance here in your clearest Shine, not the *One thousand three hundred twenty five* chief Commanders, that seem to exceed the rest in Glory, but give your Orders to the Minor Lights to make up all the Force, and with all your united Numbers make some Figure to the Great *Abraham* of the infinite Issue that I will bless him in, who from one Son shall multiply into *Myriads*, to bespangle the lower Firmament of my Church. For so shall his Seed be.

God had employed him before, to the endless work of accounting the numbers of the little *Dust* of the Earth. Now will he have him to enumerate the *Stars* of Heaven with the like impossible Imposition. Some critically observe that by the former, God pointed out the natural Seed of his Body, whose *names should be written in the Earth*, and whose very Souls would cleave to the *Dust*. But by these he decyphered to him, the *Spiritual* (*) *Children of his Faith*, all the World over, whose *names are written in Heaven*, and who should shine as *Stars* for ever and ever. Great indeed is the difference of these from the other; And Holy *Records* witness, that *Abraham*, of the innumerable Children of his *Flesh*, had but too few of his Spirit; *Isaiah* is so bold to tell us, That by that time God had measur'd off, with the long Ell of his Justice, almost the whole Piece to Destruction, for their unhappy Apostasie from the Holy Practices of their Great *Father*, but a short *Remnant* was left, that following his steps, arrived at last in the Heavenly *Canaan* with him.

From the lovely face of that Heaven, enamell'd with so many shining *Stars*, which *Abraham's* Eyes beheld in the clearest night: Turn now thine own, Reader, and gaze on another enriched with Lights, surmounting far all those, and of a more eternal duration than they, illustrating the Great *Abraham's* name. 'Tis his splendent *Faith*,

(*) *Præus promiserat semen tanquam pulverem terræ, hic sicut stellas cæli, illud potuit filios Naturales, hoc Spirituales significare. Ainsworth.*

attended on by all her Train of Graces, expatiating all the Rooms of his Soul, by a ravishing Dilatation, to receive in all the Joys of this so vast a Blessing, and giving it the most welcome Entertainment that her little Powers are able in this narrow condition she *is in*. 'Twas mighty *Faith* that brought him out of his Country, but what is this that passeth him out of *himself*, leaving all his Reason and Senses behind him, combating against all the Impossibilities of *Nature*, when there was not the least ground to fix the Foot of Belief on, but what was ready to sink under him; All hopes as tottering as his reeling *Body*, and as dead as his *Sarah's Womb*; yet now to *hope against all Hope*, and out of *Death* it self to believe out *Life*, and that with a *Courage* as resolute and immovable, as admits not the least *Allay* of Fear or Doubt; but to give Glory to God, by resigning himself up by a perfect dependance on the Infallibility of the Promise, and full assurance of the Faithfulness and Power of him that made it, without the least staggering thought: This is such a Faith in the Perfection and Flower of it, that doth render him so exceeding acceptable in the Eyes of God, that he shall be henceforth confirmed in a perfect Immunity from all the dangers of Sin and Death, which shall never prevail eternally against him, and shall qualifie him so compleatly for all the Honours of Divine *Friendship*, that he shall be taken into the Bosom, and for ever acknowledged as the Faithful *Friend* of God. As he hath justified his *Faith* by so noble Fruit as this, so will God *Justifie* it too, by setting his Seal to

the Truth and Excellency of it, and Justifying Him the Subject of it, and stamping on him the Mark and Honourable Character of a truly Religious and most sincere *Believer*; Abraham *believed in the Lord, and it was counted to him for Righteousness.*

Come hither, thou that art called a Christian, see the *Criterion* of thy future Estate; Thou say'st thou believest, thou doest well, do not the *Devils also Believe and Tremble*? But hast thou *Abraham's Justifying Faith*? Take a Survey of the Weakness of thine, and the Vanity of thy Hopes for Heaven. *Abraham* travelled out of all, and cheerfully gave up himself to be led by the Absolute Will of his God, when thou lodgest still in the dark Entry of Nature, and laughest at all the Invitations of his Grace: Thou mockest the Messengers of God that are sent to call thee, and *stick* still in the Creature and Self, disputest his Authority to rule thee. *Abraham* feasted himself in the Joys of an Invisible Saviour, and made many a Sweet Banquet upon the Promise, while thou art guzzling on the draughts of *Lust*, and greedily sucking in the deadly Potions of Sin, little remembring there is Death in the Pot, that Poysons thy Soul and Hopes together. *He* rejoiced in the Children of his Faith, which should make up a *Church* unto God, while they are all the Objects of thy Malicious Hate, who bear the least shadow of his Image upon them. He bore up a Spirit against all the Temptations of Life, and under all the Enticements of a Great and Rich Estate, ever devoting the *Cream* and *Elixir* of his Thoughts and Heart unto God,

when

when thou lockest up thy Soul in a narrow Ware-house, and drownest all thy Hopes in a shallow Stream. He dreaded not the formidable Powers of the World, that had captiv'd a Member of the Church, whilst thou (with *Saul*) art breathing out Menaces and Slaughter, and shooting all thy Darts into the Heart of Christ: He had strength to wrestle with God himself, and would not be beaten back without a Blessing, when thy Spirit sinketh with the very thoughts of that Power, whom thy wicked Life hath made thine *Enemy*; He comes back laden with the Riches of a Promise, which should make himself and all his true Children Happy, when thy poor Heart is courting other Delights, and is a perfect Stranger to the Pleasures of a Saviour. Go Christian, get a better *Faith*, that may Justifie thy *Person* before God, since be sure such works as these can never Justifie thy *Faith* before Men.

Abraham thus assured of an infinite Posterity, grows now solicitous and thoughtful for them, he discovers the nature of those cares that Afflict the Bosoms of every Godly *Parent*. He is fearful that his Children may deviate from the steps of his own Uniform Obedience and Righteousness, nor wear the same Livery of Grace that adorned his Loyal Spirit, and *Hallowed* all his Actions. His first Care is to enjoy a *Progeny*, and his next, that they might enjoy God and be Good. How rarely doth this Holy *Anxiety* oppress the Minds of Men! How would *Abraham* have swooned then, to have seen some of his Impious Children *sacrificing their Sons and Daughters unto Devils*.

The *Angels* themselves were created subject to a possible *Folly*, and Multitudes of them fell by a dreadful *Apostacy*; He had reason to fear that his *Children*, who were but *Dust*, might be *foolish* too, and forgetful of the *Rock of their Salvation*, who might therefore *sell them into the hands of their Enemies*, who would surely deprive them of their Fruitful *Canaan*: Nor was this fear the least *Flaw* in the Jewel of his Faith, but rather an *Holy Ray* that darted from it. *It abates not at all of the Perfections of God, that he is Jealous.* The Church is his *Sponse*, he is *Married* to her, and would have her *Holy as Himself*. If *Abraham* to the Promise of a Seed, and an Inheritance for them, might have another to secure them in it, by a Faith and Spirit like his own, which would entitle them to Divine Favour and Protection, surely this would Terminate his Desires, and compleat up all his Happiness.

Abraham is content to go Issueless still, rather than be the miserable Parent of *Rebels* against Heaven. *The Arrows that are shot by wicked Children against the Honour of God, pierce by the way through the hearts of their wounded fathers, and make them bleed.* God is so well pleased with the Workings of *Abraham's* thoughts, and took it so kindly from him, that he had honoured him by so absolute Resignation of his *Faith*, on the bare word of his Promise, That from hence forth he shall have little cause to question the Performance of all his future Engagements, for now he resolves to confirm them all by stronger Bars than those that Heaven and Earth are environed

roned with. He is content to enter into a Sacred Covenant with him, that shall oblige his Holiness, Honour and Truth in such irrefragable Tyes, that *Abraham's Heirs* may Sue him at their pleasure upon the Violation of them, and shall have liberty to plead the *Breach of Articles* against him in the Court of Honour, should he fail in any point of Performance. Nor were they backward (as *Vatablus* tells us) for notwithstanding themselves were so careless in keeping the *Counter-conditions*, that obliged them to Obedience and Duty; And by their continual Violations, had evacuated the whole *Covenant*, and wrenched off all the *Seals*, yet would they be so Impudent, to reproach him with a *Failure* on his Part, and frequently twit him with it, when their *Treacheries* had at any time provoked him to bring in an Enemy upon them, or put them into Banishment and Sufferings: *Recordare fœderis inter segmenta initi.* Remember the League made with *Abraham our Father*, when the *Heifer* was cut in twain, and thou passedst through the parts thereof. There was a Custom (as elsewhere, so) in *Chaldea* (whereof therefore *Abraham* could not be ignorant) That for confirming Covenants, these Ceremonies passed amongst them; A *Beast* was killed and divided into two equal Parts, which Parts were brought forth and laid at some distance over against each other, the *Federates* passing between them, and solemnly imprecating on themselves the same Death and Ruine, (so to be killed and cut in pieces as the *Beast*) if they should first break the *Covenant* and Agreement made between them. The equal Division of the

Beast seeming to represent the *Unity of Will* in both Parties, and their mutual satisfaction in the Conditions of the League. In Conformity to this Custom, *Abraham* is ordered to get ready his *Heifer*, and with that, a *Goat* and a *Ram*, all of three years Age; and to these a *Turtle Dove* and a young *Pigeon*, to prepare and place them in order, against such time as the Lord would please to come down to pass thorough them. In that the Beasts were multiplied, it signified a surer *Ratification* of the Covenant. The Conditions on Gods part were, That he would surely give unto *Abraham* for his Posterity the whole Kingdoms of *Canaan* for a Possession. *Abraham* Conditions for his Children, That they therefore should keep the Laws of the Lord, and walk in his ways, as himself would give them *Example*. Gods Passing thorough the divided parts in the Appearance of *Fire* and *Smoak*, and *Abraham's* walking through the midst of them, confirmed the Covenant, and finished the Transaction. Now must this be unto *Abraham* an infallible Assurance; God could not deny Himself, nor his Covenant. He may cease disputing for the future, How shall I know that I shall inherit it? There are Authors that make *Critical* Observations, first on the Age of the Beasts, which were All to be three years Old, and signified that this Covenant related only to the *Carnal* Posterity of *Abraham* (for there follows another for his *Spiritual*, which was to endure for evermore) who should enjoy *Canaan* during *Three* Remarkable Terminations of time. The first from *Abraham* himself to *Moses*; The second, from
Moses,

Moses to *David*; The third, from *David* to *Christ*, when by their bitter Usage and Cruelty towards Him, the whole *Articles* were torn to pieces, and themselves sent packing out of their good Land, having no longer a Promise of it.

The *Miracle* of Gods Condescension in binding Himself up to his Creatures, is a Subject for *Angels* to pry into, and for *Saints* to praise him for ever: Yet is not this all that *Abraham* shall be gratified in, there is still a farther Honour God will confer on his Favourite: He shall be admitted into his own *Privy-Council* of Heaven, and the *Arcana Imperii*, the Mysteries of State that are lock'd up in the secret Cabinet of his Bosom, shall be disclosed to him. He shall here have a perfect *Prospect* into all the Occurrences of his Family for many hundred years after, which first he shall discover in a *Type*, and then in clearer words.

First, The *Beasts* and the *Birds* do more generally shew him the different Natures of his Children; some bearing brutish Affections, creeping upon the Face of the Earth as *Beasts*; others *Soaring* in a more Spiritual Element, All their aims aspiring after Heaven. Again more particularly, The very *Heifer*, a Laborious *Slave* subjected to the *Collar*, shall Prophecie to him the Servitude of his Children under the *Egyptian Yoke*, the very Age of her shall shew him the term of that Slavery for *Three Generations* together. But then the *Turtle*, a Solitary *Bird*, that delights in the *Desart*, shall shew him also their Removal thence, and wandring in the *Wilderness* for *Forty years*. And the *Pidgeon*, a *Fowl* that loves to be *Hous'd*, shall lead

lead him to the sight of his Family fixedly settled in the Cities of *Canaan*. The very *Sleep* he fell into, is Prognostick of his last End; and the horror of Darknes that came upon him, Prophesied the grievous Troubles and dismal Afflictions his Children would fall into, as hardly should they discover any *Light* of hope for deliverance from them: God having foreshewn all these future Events unto *Abraham*, expounds them afterwards in a plain Declaration of Words, wherein he is comforted against all the Sorrows of his Posterity, by their certain Redemption from them, and his own long Life ending in a Quiet and Blessed Death: The Ceremony being ended, *Abraham* is confirmed for ever.

Observe here how the whole *Scene* of all contingent Emergencies befalling the Creatures, and issuing upon *Kingdoms*, *Families* and *Persons* throughout all Ages of Time, hang all up in One fair *Table*, Open and Naked in the Light of Gods Omniscient Eye, unalterably fixed by his firm Decrees, and all unavoidable by any Power or Wisdom of Men. How vainly then doth Humane Weakness Plot to break the Links of his Providences, which his own Mighty Arm hath so undissolvably chain'd together; That all the Combinations of *Men* or *Devils* do but weary themselves while they Idly endeavour to break them.

Take also a View of the Road to the Heavenly *Canaan*; The Land is confirmed to *Abraham* and his Heirs, with all the Assurances that a God can make him. Yet e'er they possess it, they must pass down into *Egypt*, and suffer a tedious Affliction

Affliction there, under the Tyranny and Oppression of a Cruel *Pharaoh*; and thence into an *Howling Wilderness*, to live by Faith in the want of all things, but what an immediate hand from *Providence* should reach out to them. Thus we pass still from the Slaveries of the *World*, to the *Inheritance* in Glory, from hard *Labours* to an *Eternal Sabbath*, from crying to God because of Oppression, to *rejoycing* in God because of Exaltation; from a Valley of *Tears* to a Mountain of *Joy*; from a State of *Bondage* to Everlasting *Liberty*: Through Flames of *Persecution*, into Endless *Delicetation*; from a Wearisome *Pilgrimage*, to an Everlasting *Rest*. Patiently must we tread the Steps that all others have passed before us. God himself had his *Work* before he *Rested*; The Blessed *Jesus* had *His*, which he must bring to Perfection, e'er ever he hath Confidence to go to his Father; *I have finished the work thou hast given me to do, and now I come to thee*. He walks first to the Cross, e'er ever he receives the Crown, and *drinks of the brook in the way*, e'er his Glorious Head is *Exalted*. The *Apostles* and *Martyrs* swim to Heaven thorough the *Red Sea* of their own Blood, and through many *Tribulations* must we all enter into the *Kingdom of God*. Ridiculously do we hope for an easier way, than which all the Holy *Pilgrims* have gone before us, and God in his Wisdom hath chalked out to us by his Eternal Decrees to walk in. Let us Glance for a Moment on the *People* of these Kingdoms, at whose Doors God hath lately sealed *Leases of Ejectment* by his Irrevocable Oath unto *Abraham*; They
merrily

merrily pass their years away; they laugh at Fear, not a Melancholly Thought dares approach their Hearts; They Correct the Insolency of those Groundless Dreads that suggest but the least *Jealousie* of any future Danger. Every day is an *Holiday* with them; They keep a perpetual *Carnival*, and distill all the Luxurious *Issues* of their Country into *Spirits*, which serve them to exhilarate their *Own* into Mirth and Jollity; They Sacrifice to their *Idols* in profuse *Libations*, and pay them the liberal Tributes of their grateful Affections under all the Peace and Prosperity they enjoy. While now the Fatal *Sentence* had passed out from Heaven against them, and the *Hand-writing* of Ruine stuck on the *Walls* of every House in *Canaan*, and there shall rest till they undermine themselves, and an heavy hand of Judgment gives Fire to those Trains which shall surprizingly blow them up for ever. Take heed, Reader, the case be not thine own: *Sin* is an *Engineer in the Dark*, that is ever contriving the means of our utter Desolation. There is a *Faux* in thine own Bosom, with a *Match* ready lighted to do *Execution*, while thou dreamest not in the least of a Danger upon thee, and art all the while heaping up *Wrath against the day of Wrath*, and *Piling* up those *Faggots* with thine own Hands, which shall shortly be enkindled to burn thee out of all thine Earthly Comforts, and send thee yet into hotter Flames than these. And whilst thou lyeest in the Lap of these *Dalilah's*, God knows how soon the *Philistines* may be upon thee; And what knowest thou, but the *Decree may be gone forth against thee*

thee already, and thou hast nothing that secures thy Stay but the pure *Patience* of that God whom daily thou abusest, that doth yet wait, and Reprieves thee from the *Writ of Execution*. 'Tis well known that Those in the *Wilderness*, in the midst of their security had an *Oath* clapt upon them because of their Provocations, which they could never get off 'till their Carcasses fell; they were so fettered by it that it was impossible for them to get into *Canaan*: And yet had they a few *sun-shine Summers* granted them, (as these condemned *Amorites*,) they ran about a while with God's *Curse* upon them, as the manacled Prisoners of his Wrath. To small ends of true Comfort and Safety is it to be thrown upon a *Couch* of Ease and Pleasure, (wrapt in soft and silken Wreaths of Security and Peace) and there to slumber 'till Death and Judgment dragg thee thence, and tumble thee down into a Bed of Flames for ever.

C H A P. VI.

Abraham by Sarah's *Persuasions* goeth in unto Hagar, she conceiveth and grows proud; being afflicted of her Mistress she fleeth into the Wilderness, where an Angel meets her and turns her back. The Birth of Ishmael.

While Abraham walks on (in Confidence of this Covenant) with full Vigour and Strength of Soul, Sarah's Hopes decline with her Years, and comes *limping* after him with a *weary foot*: The Promise of a Seed had been made to her Lord, but it was not yet revealed by what *Venter* he should enjoy it, most probably from any other than her own *Barren* one: And rather than this *Tree of Righteousness* should want *Branches* and *Fruit*, she is content that he *Inoculate* on a *Crab-stock*: (No wonder then the Production prove but *wild* and *sowre*, participating more of the Juice of the degenerate *Root* than the sweeter Nature of the true *Plant*;) but rather than to be no *Mother*, she is satisfied with being one at *second Hand*, and is willing to rock her Maids Cradle; and doubtless she had great Kindness for Hagar, who was most happy in such a Mistress, that would gratifie her faithful Service with that unusual *Civility* of sending her *Husband* to Bed to her. This is not the ordinary manner of *Womens* Kindness,

who

who will part with every thing sooner than the *Monopoly* of their Husbands *Love*. But *Sarah's* Case began to be desperate, who notwithstanding the repeated Promises of Children made to her *Abraham*, was yet never the less Barren than before; and it being never yet said that the Heir should be born of her Body, she knew not but that God himself might inspire her to make the *Motion*, and speak the good Word to her *Lord* for *Hagar*; therefore she contrives to lend away a piece of his Heart to her *Maid*, and to admit her as the secondary *Object* of his Affections, and should not much repent it, if she still contain her self within her Limits, and pay her the dutiful Respect owing to so kind a *Mistress*.

'Tis disputed whether *Abraham* or *Sarah*, either or neither of them, sinn'd against God in this Action. For Him 'tis argued, that he did it not from any Motion of Lust, who notwithstanding his *Wife's* Barrenness, had never been tempted to wander in his *Affections* from her, but humbly waited upon God to effect his Promises by those means which himself had decreed to produce them, and had never upbraided his dearest Wife of her *Sterility*, the only Impediment to his Happiness in a Son. Nor was it contrary to the Custom of *Nations*, and that as yet there was no Law expressed against *Polygamy*. Nor was he himself first in the Motion, but was led to it by the Desire, Approbation, and Consent of his *Sarah*. But above all, since God had told him that all the *Nations of the Earth* should be blessed in his seed, he might possibly incur

curr the danger of God's displeasure, if by any default of his own he should hinder the *Salvation* of the World. The Promise being only to himself and not unto *Sarah*, of having such Issue as might render it *happy*; he had now waited already *Ten Years* for the Accomplishment of that Promise, and might possibly think himself obliged from the *Tradition* so common, *Si Mulier non pepererit intra decem Annos, tenetur ejus Maritus ad primam, secundam ducere Uxorem*, — If the Woman bear no Child within ten Years, her Husband may take a second Wife to the first. These are the *Arguments* commonly used for *Abraham*.

For *Sarah* 'tis pleaded, That she bore the Infelicity of her *Barrenness* with an humble resignation, and not with that Impatience as afterwards did *Rachel* her Grand-daughter: And that she thought her self unworthy so great an Honour as to be the Mother of the *blest Seed*, and did not ill at all in consulting the Means by which so great a Blessing might be derived to Mankind; she attempered her self to the *Divine Will*, and will not envy that glory to her *Hand-maid*. She took it heavily that so great a Person as *Abraham* should be deprived of the Blessing of *Children*, and that her own Incapacity should make void the Promises of God. See my Lord *Abraham*, God hath restrained unworthy me from Bearing, thou vainly expectest *Children* from me; and I plainly perceive that God intends me not the Honour of making thee a joyful Father, if he did, he hath the *Key of the Womb*, and might easily heal my *Barrenness*:

but

but since 'tis not his good pleasure, I humbly submit my self and chearfully give way to another: It matters not much whether I bear or no, but it concerns all the World that thou hast that *seed* which must make it happy: The Child of my *Maid* will be *Mine* by Law, and I shall embrace and *Adopt* it as my own. In this *Glass* we may visibly perceive her Reverence and Love to her Husband, and beyond that, her Pious Care for all the World; and is blameable in nothing but what is common to all her Sex, a little Impatience and over-running the *Decree* of God, who is wise enough to *flush* our callow *Precipitancies*, and *Ripen* them all to flye to his Glory. And it may be a greater than *Abraham* or *Sarah* was here in the *Council*; for we may well know how serviceable *Hagar* proves to the whole Church of God, in lending not only an *Hand* to dress up an *Allegory*, but her *Shoulder* too, to juggle out the *Old Covenant*, which was so unwilling to give way to the *New*.

The *Hebrews* (*) to keep up the Honour of *Abraham*, and that he degraded not himself by entring into the Chamber of *Hagar*, will needs have us to believe that she was of Royal Extraction, and *Daughter* to the King of *Egypt*; they will not own him to have entred into a meaner *Bed* than that of a *Princess*; but while they seek to keep up the Reputation of their *Father*, they see not how foully they betray the ill manners of their *Mother*, who after her Con-

(*) Hanc fuisse Pharaonis filiam dicunt Hebraei. Lyra.

ception treated the Daughter of a King so hardly. Be her *Birth* what it will, 'twas Honour enough to *Hagar* to be second in *Abrahams* Affections, and for his sake to wear the Dignity in Holy *Records* of being the Grand-mother of twelve *Princes*.

Hagar's Spirits swell with her *Belly*, she nourishes the *Embryo* and a *Tympany* together: The height of her *Pride* plainly demonstrates the *lowness* of her *Birth*. Right Noble *Blood* sweetly streams in the happy Channel of its own rich *Veins*, when the baser *Gore*, like *Jordan*, breaks all bounds, and overfloweth all its *Banks*: There are no *Reins* can bridle up the Insolency of a proud *Usurper*. He that manages well enough the little *Pinnacle* of a smaller *Fortune*, grows giddy when riding with a *Top-Gallant*. *Hagar* humble enough in the *Closet*, grows Arrogant under her Preferment to the Bed of *Sarah*. Behold, she which dragged two Kings at the *Chariot Wheels* of her *Beauty*, is here despised in the Eyes of her own *Maid*. The *Concubine* of *Abraham* insults over his *Lady*. Pretenders to Religion, who force a Kiss from *Jesus*, (with *Judas*) Sell his Person, and break the Peace of his *Family*, when those that of a long time have lain in his Bosom (with *John*) seek above every thing to preserve it. The young Jilts of an Upstart *Profession*, have frequently rent the Church into those gaping *Schisms* which an whole *Council* of Fathers have hardly been able to close up. This *Under-sucker* from the first discovery of her budding out, waxes most insufferably haughty in that *sap* which she had thiev'd from the

Top

Top branch. 'Tis she that must make her *Lord* happy in that *Fruit*, which his *Sarah* had never the Honour to bear him ; (*) as if God himself had given her a *Bill of Divorce* from that Dignity and *Abraham's* Bed together, to make sole room for her self, the *Elect* Mother of the great *Heir* that was to come : She seems a *Type* of *Diotrephes*, who would shove out the beloved Disciple, to get the Preheminence into his own hands over all the *Household* of God. *Ambition* is a dangerous *Pestilence* in the sacred Building, and eats through the very *Rafters* of it. This *Bond-woman* grows so intolerably high, that common Prudence necessitates her humbling : *Sarah* is resolved to cut her *Comb*, and break the Egg of this *Cockatrice* e're it be hatched into a Serpent ; if she *biss* already, she may chance to bite hereafter. How doth God frequently blast those *Councils* that derive not direction from the *Sanctuary* ! Now is the goodly frame of *Sarah's* Project fallen upon her own *Head*, and ready to break it, while she vainly contrived to build the House of *Abraham* with this *untempered Mortar* : So infallibly will they be deceived who think to prefer the *Hagarine* Humours of *Nature* into a Conjunction with Divine Grace, and put them to Bed together in hopes of an eternal *Issue* : where instead of Generating an *Heir* to *Abraham*, they fall to scratching each other, and nothing appears but

(*) *Despexit eam tanquam a divino Promisso repudiatam.*
Lyra:

a mad *Ishmael*, that flies in the Face of every one, without any Favour to its own *Benefactors*. Gold and Dirt make an ill Mixture, and but daubs the Fingers of him that endeavours to temper them together. In short, *Sarah* perceives her Folly, and too late repents her precipitant *Counsels*; who by calling up her Maid to stand *Cheek by Jole* with her self, soon discovered the danger of being overtopp'd in her own *House*, should she thus go on to raise her *Heels* so high, and perk up so loftily as she began: She resolves therefore to put in her *Bill* of Complaint, though she knew not the Issue of her *Suit*, since (she fears) the *Judge* himself is a Party against her, and too openly favours her *Adversary*: Yea, she is bold in her *Declaration* to Accuse him downright of an unjust *Compliance*, and (should that fail) she doubts not to prove him guilty of too great a *Connivance* at the Insolencies of his *Minion*: And was really Jealous that her New Sheets had feloniously drawn away all his old Affections from her self. But should she find him no kind *Chancellor*, she resolves to Appeal unto God Himself, who would surely look into the *Merits* of her *Cause*, and pass a most equitable Sentence for her.

Abraham the sole *Arbiter* of this Difference (mindful of his *Sarah's* Fidelity to him under all the Temptations of *Pharaoh's* Court) cannot now justifiably warp from his Integrity to her for the sake of any *Egyptian* Slave, and is wise enough to allay the heat of *Sarah's* fury, by giving her satisfactory Evidence of the coldness

of

of the Great Abraham.

III

of his Love to *Hagar*, which he could manifest in nothing more clearly to her, than by calling her up to the *Bench*, and leaving her there to pass her own *Decree*. *Behold thy Maid is in thy hand, do to her as it pleaseth thee*: Very Prudent and Admirable *Justice*, since (who is ignorant) that from the little *Sparks* of Contention, kindled by *Ambition* and Jealousie, on the Spirit of *Women*, have too often issued those *Fires* which have burned to a dreadful Conflagration. The *Sword* in their *Lips* have been snatched thence into the *Hands* of their Husbands, and made bloody work in the Church of God. *Abraham* yields the *Concubine* to be blown up, to prevent the running of the Flame any farther in his *Family*; and (for ought we can find) *Sarah* spares for no Powder. How happy and Righteous were we, if in this we could imitate our *Father*, and in the bustling Broils between *Flesh* and *Spirit*, ever take part with the high-born *Soul*, labouring under all the proud *Tyrannies* of her Insulting baser Enemy, delivering her up to suffer the just penalties of her Insolence and Folly, who must be dealt with as a *Slave*, and thoroughly humbled, lest she make the whole *House* too hot for us here, and at last lead us away Prisoners with her, and both perish together.—*I keep under my Body, and bring it into subjection, lest I my self become a cast-away.*

But tho' *Paul* was happy and successful in the Methods of his *Discipline* over his *Flesh*; yet all the severity *Sarah* could make use of, did little work any Change upon her *Bond-woman*, to reduce her within *Bounds* of her Duty. O the

Stranger. The World was mistaken in them, if they were not Notorious already. They thought she had come to Town to have improved her self rather by them, and added to her happiness in their Company, than thus mischievously to Plot against them. Besides, 'twas rudely done of her, not to give them the Priority of the Invitation. They like not she should be so great with their Husbands.

The *Empress* was of too sensible a Spirit to pass by the Affront, without the just Revenge payable to it. She will make them know that she hath not so low a Soul to put up such an Affront to her *Honour*, so tamely as they imagin; And is very glad that themselves give the first Occasion of the Breach, they shall quickly feel the effects of their stubborn Folly and Rebellion.

If the *Spirit* of Purity hath drawn a Curtain over that *Obscene* Advice, that once was whisper'd by the Cursed *Sorcerer* into *Balak's* Ears, and hath modestly hinted the time only, when the wicked Counsel was given, which prov'd so fatal to the poor Children of *Abraham*: Marvel not, *Reader*, if my Pen blush to describe the unnatural Revenge which the *Sorcereß* dictated to the Men of *Sodom*, whose hot pursuit of her pernicious Orders, was the Torch that lighted the Flames of their Ruine, and stamped upon them the black Character of *Exceedingly Wicked*. 'Tis enough if thou know that *God* gave them up to the most villainous Exorbitancies, and the fury of unnatural and unaccountable Lusts; to Charge an *Incubus*, and Ravish *Pluto*, while Nature it self recoils at the Horrour of so Infernal a Courtship.

Pride checkles at the happy success of her Project, and finds her *Disciples* so tractable, that she resolves to raise an *Academy* in the City, to train up Youth to *Succession*: Her self will sit in the *Chair*, and Read daily *Lectures* of Debauchery and the blackest Arts, and those so Publick, that none shall pretend the want of Opportunity to pass into the greatest Proficiencies in them. She designs them all for *Epidemical* Profit, and therefore shall be performed in open *School*. She celebrates *Impudence* as a glorious Vertue, and to be found *Blushing* is present Expulsion, (tho' few were found in *Sodom* of that Maidenly Complexion.) *Epicurus* hath but stolen his principles from her: She assures them that the Soul dies with the Body, and there is nothing better than to *Eat and Drink*. They must contemplate nothing but *Sensuality* and the *Palate*, protesting to them how great a God the *Belly* was; and that nothing would satisfy this *Deity* better, than when they made much of themselves. The more they *Offer* to him, the sooner should they experience the Blessing, to whose Sacrifices their *Fields* and *Herd*s yielded them so cheap an Assistance, that they would be the ungratefulest Persons living, should they not load his *Altars* with their frequent *Victims*.

This Doctrine sounded so sweetly in their Ears, and was suited so fitly to their natural Constitutions, that you might have seen the Furniture of their stately *Plains* taken off and devoted to the voracious Gulph of *Gluttony*. Each *Park* and *Forrest* sent in their liberal Contributions; the Luscious *Venison* is immur'd in Pales

of *Paste*: The stately *Taurus* dress'd up with Gilded *Horns* and Flowery *Garlands*, presenting himself in Sacrifice to the great *Colon*. *Beasts* lie mangled on every *Stall*, and more *Shambles* ordered to be presently built; a general slaughter is proclaimed. The innocent Inhabitants of the *Air* cannot flie in peace for them, and the *Scaley Nations* are made to swim in Ponds of *Butter*. *Dishes* march in Battel Array, and Jolly *Boles* go Round, while *Gomorrhah* Smoaks too, and the *Five Cities* are all but one *Kitchen*. *Hogsheads* bleed, and the *Conduits* run with the Blood of *Noah's Vintage*. *Musick and Songs, Good Cheer and Wine, and Wine, and Songs, and Musick, and Good Cheer; an Health, and an Health, and Ten thousand Healths* to her who had made *Sodom* happy, and brought a perpetual *Holy-day* with her: Teaching them the true end and use of Life, and merrily to pass their Time away. When before her Arrival, their days were spent in carking Cares, and solicitous Thoughts for the World, which basely Captiv'd them in the Chains of a fordid Bondage, and made them very Slaves to their own degenerate Humours, from all which she had so happily freed them, and open'd the Gates of that grateful *Liberty*, that makes every Mortal so Happy. *Pride, Fulness of Bread, and abundance of Idleness* was in her.

The poor Women finding how the Game ran began to relent, and think it folly to stand out any longer. They fall in with the Humour of the Time, and see *Coyneſs* and *Stiffneſs* grow quite out of *Faſhion*. They found themselves losers already by an unprofitable *Haughtineſs* them

which

which (if they persisted in) might in a little time, render their whole Sex but *needless and immodish*, since there was no standing against her who swayed all the *Town*. They are willing therefore to yield a little and out of *Policy* to be more tractable, since very *necessity* drave them to it. They think upon Terms of Accommodation with the *Empress*, who they hope is not so *Implacable* by Nature, but may be by some means appeased again, while themselves will give her those fair Demonstrations of future *Conformity*, which may work her to better Apprehensions of them. To this end they let loose all the Reins of *Modesty* and *Chastity*, (by which they think) they had been Restrained too long already, to run in a full career the Race of all Licenciousness and Lust: *Vertue* grows a very *Burden* and hateful to them. *Pleasure* the only brave *Goddeß* they Adore, in whose Service they are so superstitious and severe, that they devote their whole Time and Studies to approve themselves her most *Bigotted* *Votaries*. The snares of Temptation are weaved by every Hand, they dress themselves up into all the Advantages of *Love*, and have Exchange of *Complexions* that suit with the several Fancies of every new *Admirer*. That day is lost that is not bless'd with fresh *Assignations* of to Morrows Joys, and they awake to nothing but renewed *Acts* of Yesterdays Frolicks. They take care not to appear too frequently in the same *Garb*, *Ridiculing* those of meaner Fortune whose Abilities supply them not to the same Variety of Dress. They look with scorn on those that Retire themselves to the Inner Rooms with the *Torment*

of keeping at Home, who have not the Invitation to *Gallant* it abroad, or be blessed with the Courtships of a *secret Love*. They are Mad that Nature had not lodg'd upon them the most killing Charms of Lust, which they strive to supply by Artificial Means, and the bewitching Arts of Language and Wit. They— But alas! My very Ink blushes to pass any further, and the humour of our Age needs little Instruction into courses they Imitate already so much to the Life.

When the great *Ninive* was ripe for Judgment, God sent them a *Prophet* to give them notice of their approaching *Ruine* (and gave them *Forty days* to consider of the Message;) the Breath of whose Mouth blew them All to the *Ground* in the deepest Agonies of Terror and Sorrow. *Proclamations* issue out for a General *Fast*, and the whole *Court* (for Example to the People) are wrapt in *Sack-cloth*, and the *Ashes* on their *Heads*, very happily prevented the whole *City* from being turned all into *Cinders*. When God himself drew Arguments of Pity from their present *Penance*, the *Tears* of the *Children* and the very *Looing* of the *Cattle*, turns his Heart, and prevails to revoke the *Decree*. But such was the fearful Defection of *Sodom*, that the Inhabitants there were more *Brutish* than the *Beasts*; so Pamper'd and Shining, so ready and fit for the *Slaughter*, that he resolves now by an *Immutable Decree*, to Offer up an *Holocaust* of them all, to the honour of his Justice, and the *Eternal Memorial* of the Sacrifice: so *Great* and Exceeding were their *Provocations*, that he will not deal with them as with other Sinners, and summon them severally

to Judgment, as they are taken and Arrested by Death: But a *Commission* of Oyer and Terminer shall be sealed for their immediate Tryal and Execution: Giving all the World notice by their *Pre-damnation*, what themselves must expect for the same Guilts at the General *Conflagration*.

And now *Sodom*, the last Scene of thy *Tragedy* is just upon Acting, and the merry *Banquet* of thy Luxury is hastening to an End: Wrath and Destruction bring in the *Voider*, *Tables* and *Guests* are hurried away together. Thou hast enjoyed a long and pleasant *Day* to Act the *Comedy* of thy Mirth, but now it's dying into an *Eternal Night*. The *Play* is over, and the *Musick* is ended. 'Twas all but a *Frolick*, and Frolicks are grown so Natural and Customary to thee, that even in Death thou canst not leave them, thou wilt *Act* one more, and thy Last, upon the very *Ladder*, and that shall shut up all for ever.

The *Executioners* of Justice drawing near to the Gates, the Genteel *Lot* (who had learned from his *Uncle* the generous Duty of Hospitality and Kindness) perceiving them entring, was there sitting, ready to offer them a free and courteous *Invitation* to his House, (little thinking they brought with them the *Writ* for the Burning it and the whole City together.) He is Cordial in his Civility, that no pretence of excuse shall prevail upon him to be denied. He knew the Streets of *Sodom* were too dangerous for *Strangers* to lodge in, when the strongest *Bolts* could hardly secure them from the Insolencies of the Place. In their passage from the Gate to his House, the *Fair Guests* are observed by every Eye to be

Persons of lovely and delicate Presence (as Angels ever delight to bind themselves up in handsom *Covers*) such *Beauties* as these must not think to depart the Town (where *Pride* and *Luxury* kept a Court) without paying *Homage* to their abominable *Orders*: The *Word* is given by the Pimping Officers, about all the City, and scarcely had these *Strangers* (unknown) received the *Courtesies* of the House, and *Lor's* unhappy *Wife* dress'd the last Supper before she condens'd into *Salt*; but their Lodging is beset with the General Assembly of the *Rioters*: *Old and Young*, all the *People* from every quarter (as well such as *Age* had rendred Impotent, as those whom yet *Time* had not maturated into Sufficiency) demanding out the very *Harbingers* of their Death, (as if the pure Spirits had assumed Bodies to become the base *Succubusses* of their Lust;) giving them by this too clear an Evidence, that the loud Cry of their *Villanies* had not made a false Alarm to Heaven, and that the bitter *Clusters* of this unnatural *Vine of Sodom*, were fully *Ripe*, and ready to be press'd into the Fats of Eternal Vengeance.

There is yet hope when the poor Slave of *Concupiscence* veils his Guilty Head, and Muffles himself up, while he slyly creeps through the back Door into the *Brothel of Impurity*, trembling in every Joynt, lest discovery be made of his shameful Adventure to his eternal Ignominy and Reproach. But for Lust to *beat up the Drum*, and make her *Proclamations* till the *Roll* of her *Levies* swell into so formidable a *Bigness*, as shall create in her a proud Confidence of beating down all

all the possible resistance that Virtue and Modesty can Rally against her: 'Tis high time then for the *Hierarchy* of Heaven to fly to their *Arms*; and alas! a small *Powder-charge*, shot into the *Eyes* of the Rebels, shall secure them well enough for the present, till on the morrow the *Ammunition* arrive, that shall dispatch them all at a Blow.

The *Sun* made hast from the *Antipodes* that Night, and was gotten up very early into the visible *Horizon*, to appear in Triumph over *Sodom's* Tragedy. Many fair Courses had he made, while his glittering *Eyes* in a full Prospect had been steddily fixt on their profligate *Actions*, and blush'd (when themselves could not) at their abominable Impudencies, repining to yield them *Light* to so many Deeds of *Darkness*. But this *Morning* he appears to bid them *Adieu* for ever, and e'er He or They return to Bed again, they shall find themselves scorch'd in more sensible Heats than *His*: However he would be kind still, to visit their *Ruines* in his passage, which done, he wrapt himself up in a Cloud, and gives notice to the *Ministers* below, that the dreadful Hour was come, and Heaven was ready to give fire.

How little apprehensive the Town was, of a Storm of *Brimstone* and *Flakes of Fire* ready to consume them, we may judge by last Nights *Attack*, made with such Vigour and Force upon the *Angels*. They hold up their Courage to the last Moment, and Magnanimously pass down into *Everlasting Burnings*. To little purpose did *Lot* make his *Harangue* to his Sons in *Law*, who

repay his Kindness with *Fears and Mocks*, and believe him as little as the *Old World* did *Noah*, when he Prophesied to them of a *Deluge*: Or as the Men of this Generation do those who talk to them of a *Day of Judgment*; they therefore Meritoriously reap the Fruits of their *Incredulity* and Contempt of *Admonition*, and leave us the true *Prospective* to discover which is the most condemning Sin: Even *Unbelief*.

And surely there is a *Faith* in the World, *Lazy* and *Idle*, that makes as little haste to escape the General Ruine, as *Lot* did out of *Sodom*, who though himself believes, and perswades others to secure their Safety, yet is not very *Expeditions* to further his *own*; and appears to be saved rather by the meer Mercy of God, and the Power of *Abraham's* Intercession, than its own care. Very happy are we in a better *Advocate*, who delivers us from the *Drowsiness* of our own *Faith*, and keeps us by his own power to *Salvation*.

The Pleasures of *Sodom* that brought him *hither*, detains him *here*, and though the *Angels* hasten and urge him to dispatch by the affrighting Arguments of Destruction with the *Sinners*, yet he lingers still, till they pluck him as a *Brand out of the fire*. 'Tis not our own *Free Will*, but Gods *Free Grace* that preventeth our Ruine. We should ever be attentive to the *Angel of the Covenant*, who is always crying out to us, *Arise, and depart, for here is not your Rest*. Make haste least ye be consumed in the Iniquity of the *World*.

Lot and his Wife and two Daughters are brought without the *City*, and commanded to escape for their *Lives*, and look not behind them; but *Eight Persons* out of the whole *Old World*, and but *Four* are preserved out of *Sodom*: *Follow not a Multitude to do evil*. To walk with God, is a securing *Grace*, though none but thy self do it. To walk with the *World* is sure *Destruction*, though *Millions* together do it: *Peter* knew what he said, when he advised Men to *Save themselves*.

And now in the very Moment, to let us see that *Mercy* can Triumph over *Judgment*; He that would have saved all for *Tens sake*, will yet save *One* of the *Cities* for *Ones sake*. *Zoar* shall escape at the Entreaty of a *Lot*. 'Twas *Sodom* that had driven the *Whole-sale Trade* of Abominations, and was the Head Quarters of *Pride*. (This was unpardonable, that *Pride* was in her.) *Zoar* dealt but by *Retail*, and *Pedled* in her *Merchandizes of Fornication*. Hither the *Old Man* flies, as to a *City of Refuge* from the Storm. God hath his *Pella's* still, for his *hidden ones* till the *Indignation* be over-past: Well might they afford him *Lodgings* there, whose *Prayers* prevented all their going to *Bed in Hell*.

I perceive there is a Time when *Complements* and *Courtship* will be quite out of Fashion. *Lot* hath not an *Hand* or an *Arm* for his *Wife*, when his own whole *Body* is in danger; he presses forward and shifts for himself, leaving her to *Trudge* after as she could; 'twere well if so many were not *over-courty* together, handing one another into *Death*. The hour is coming when

when the Dearest *Relations* shall be all swallowed up in that nearest *Interest of Self-preservation*.

Lot's Wife was a Native of *Sodom*; her Body was out of, but her *Affections* were in it still. So little doth God value the *Carcass-service* of *Hypocrites*, that he will make them the more lasting *Monuments* of his Wrath: While she disobeys the Command, and her *Eyes* turn back to look after her *Heart*, her whole Body is Petrified, and the Eyes of the whole World commanded to look upon her, now become a *standing Pillar*, that yet hath a *Voice*, and loudly preaches the Dangers of *Disobedience*, *Ingratitude* and *Back-sliding*; and least *Time* should wear out the Memorial of so strange a Prodigy, the *Son of God* comes from Heaven to proclaim it afresh, and sets up a Buoy to prevent our Splitting upon the *Rock* against which that unhappy Creature broke her self: And whenever thy deceitful Heart starts back from God, Terrifie it with three words, (as three Darts shot by *Joab* into *Absalom's* Heart, to end that Rebellion against so great a King and Father;) *Remember Lot's Wife*. God had sent his *Angel* to deliver her out of the Flame; that *Angel* had given her fair warning by no means to *Look back*: *Zoar* was but a little way, whither she had Orders to escape: She had the company of her *Husband* and *Children* with her, yet she alone (insensible of these Mercies) despises them all and will Sin, and she alone that *Sins* doth Suffer. No Means nor Mercies can prevail with the *Obstinate* and *Wilful*; while others believe to the saving of the Soul, They draw back to Perdition,
and

and turn from the Holy Commandment delivered unto them: Whose end therefore is Destruction.

Naked and Bare passes Lot out of Sodom, leaving all his Riches and Goods behind him as Fuel to the Flames. His Life only is given to him for a Prey, to let Him see how little he had advantaged himself by an Intermixture with the Wicked, and to teach us how low and mean our Gains will be in this Evil World, when at the last we shall carry nothing out of it but a Shroud to lap the Poor Carcass in: And very happy shall we be, if in the loss of every thing else, we make our escape with a Soul to God washed from the Pollutions that are in the World through Lust, by the precious Blood of Jesus.

Art thou gotten up, Reader, and with Abraham early viewing the dismal Obsequies upon the Hill of Contemplation: Look out yonder, and see how Wrath and Justice are burying the filthy Cities into their fiery Graves, in a miserable new and unheard of Manner: Here is no Earth to Earth, Dust to Dust; Alas! they had acted as Devils, and overturned all the Laws of Humane Nature: Therefore, as Infernal Spirits shall receive their Interment, Fire to Fire, Flame to Flame, Burning to Burning, in sure and certain Desperation of any other Resurrection than to everlasting Damnation from Jesus Christ, who shall raise their vile bodies to make them yet more vile, according to his mighty Power, whereby he subdues all things to himself.

Come, lend thine Ears a while, to the sad Screeks and Yellings of the miserable Wretches thorough every Street in Sodom, and the same answered by those of Gomorrah; and Admah and Zeboim

Zeboim Ecchoing to both : Lord ! into what Confusion hath Pride and her Idle , *Gluttonous, Drunken, Beastly, Filthy, Unnatural* Counsels betrayed them ! When there was but one dead in the several *Families of Egypt*, what an Outcry and Noise, what a fearful Distraction was there at *Midnight* ! what a Tossing and Tumbling to hasten away *Israel*, when there was no other Fright, but of one quietly *Dead in his Bed* in each House ! But here the Lord thundered in the *Heavens*, the most high gave his voice, *Hail-stones and Coals of Fire*; he sent out his *Arrows* and scattered them, he shot out his *Thunderbolts* and discomfired him. Their cursed Eyes behold the Shower of *Fire and Brimstone* falling down on them all, whole *Flakes and Rolls of Fire* first burning down their *Houses*, to make the more haste to seize on their more combustible *Carkasses*, which had been so long *baking* in the *Oven* of their flaming Lusts, into a perfect *Crust* of *Obduration* and *Sencelessness*, they were become now fit for nothing but the *Fire* : The *Plague* is proportionably suited to the *Sin* ; they flame in *Lust*, God flames in *Wrath* ; and because their Heats were *Unnatural*, so shall these also, and the aspiring *Element* shall act *Retrograde*, and descend to consume them : They *Universally Suffer* as they *Universally Sin* : *Old and Young environ the House*, *Old and Young* are environed in their own : The young *Urchins* of *Villany* are put into the *Fry*, to prevent the cursed *Succession* of their *Breed* : *Their Fruit is rooted out of the Earth*, and their *Seed from among the Children of Men*. O tremendous *Spectacle* ! to see them altogether, *Houses* and

and *Bodies of Men, Women and Children, Cattel,* and whatsoever was found within their Bounds, all roaring together in one Raging *Furnace heated seven times,* and blown up by the furious *Breath* of an incensed God, whose *Smoak* passed up in *thick and black Clouds and Pillars,* darkening the very *Air,* and benighting *Heaven* it self. Upon what *Hill* wert thou gotten, thou most accursed *Sorcereß,* *Piping and Dancing* with *Nero* to the *Flames* of thine own kindling, while it is *Sport and Recreation* to thee to see them all burning in a *Flame* together? Where will be the end of thy bloody *Tragedies*?

Sixteen times in Holy Record hath God lighted up the *Fire of Sodom,* to affright (if possible) the whole *World* from the *Execrable Provocations* that enkindled them. His *Holy Spirit* hath held up the *Tapers* in whose *Light* we see them in *Hell,* as if our very *Eyes* beheld them there. They are *Suffering the Vengeance of eternal fire,* and their *Damnation* set forth for a fearful *Example* to those that hereafter should live *ungodly.* But *Alas!* Man's *Wickedness* hath made Gods *Examples* as void and uneffectual as his *Counsels.* To find *Sodoms Vices* surviving among the poor *Heathen,* is horrible, but to see them translated into the *Church of God,* is *Insufferable;* whose *Eyes* runs not down with *Tears* to hear of the *Daughters of Sion* exceeding the *Daughters of Sodom* in *Pride and Wantonness.* But to find the *Brothel-houses* (erected for the very *Trade of Sodomy*) so impudently out-facing the *Temple of God;* This might call for *Tears* of *Blood.* And I could wish *History* had fail'd of *Truth,* when it tells us of a
Dispens-

Dispensation granted to the Family of a *Cardinal* for the same *Villany*, with a *Fiat ut petitur*. ('Tis a strange Power that can rake up Vices out of *Hell*, to bring them up and make them in Fashion again upon *Earth*.) It were well too that others dispens'd not with themselves in *Practices* as Vitious as theirs in *Sodom*. God grant they be not found in our own *Streets*, and the Daughters of *England* as Idly passing away their precious *Time* and *Souls* together, as those that so long ago were sent into *Torment* for the same *Sin*. What were the *Incentives* that enkindled the *Flames* upon our own *Houses*, and reduced them all into *Asbes*? Would Men think there is a *Sin* (lurking in their own *Bosoms*) which far exceedeth the *Sin of Sodom*, and which will one day meet with Judgment more Scorching and Intolerable; 'tis but believing the *Oracle of Truth*, who hath convincingly forewarned us of the dangerous Consequences of that Fatal Contempt of his *Person* and *Gospel*, that every where Reigns, and whose *Plagues* are legible enough in *Caper-naum's Woe*, that are sentenc'd by the *Judge* himself to an hotter place in Torments than the *Sodomites*; and surely very deservedly too, it being nothing less than the *Trampling under foot the Blood of a God*, and doing despite to the *Spirit of Grace*. This is *That Condemnation* which will double Their Sorrows upon our Own Heads: And our *Unbelief* shall not make the *Word of God* of none effect. Let us Repent, and prepare for his second Coming, who once for ever hath cautioned us by Them, not to be surprized in the like Security: Since in the very day that Lot went out of *Sodom*,

it rained Fire and Brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all.

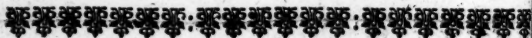
Heaven showers down Hell on Guilty Wights,
 Vile (as were those Infernal Spirits)
 Flaming in Lusts unnatural,
 Ripe for Destruction, down they fall
 To their own Places, Scorched there
 In Everlasting Heats, when here
 The dreadful Judgment Awes us not ;
 Ah me, the Tragedies of Sin forgot !
 Nor Waves, nor Fires of Vengeance can
 Melt the Hard and Obdurate Man ;
 Yet what, nor Flames can do, nor Flood,
 May easily be wrought by Blood.
 Come Lord (the Work's thine own) and save
 A perishing World from the Grave !

FINIS.



ERRATA in the *Life of Abraham.*

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for *Now* r. *No*.



Remarques
ON THE
L I F E

Of the GREAT

Abraham,

THE

FATHER of the Faithful,

AND THE

FRIEND of GOD.

By S. JAY, Rector of *Chinner* in the
County of *Oxon*.

Isaiah 51. v. 2.

Look unto Abraham your Father.

LONDON, Printed for *John Dunton*
at the *Black Raven* in the *Poultry*, over
against the *Compter*. 1689.

THE
FATHER OF THE FATHERS

AND
THE
FATHER OF THE FATHERS

147:10

WIDOW, printed for the
at the Black Room in the Strand
against the Copper-plate



TO THE

Right Reverend Father in GOD,

GILBERT

Lord Bishop of SARUM.

My Lord,

THat I presume to devote these Papers to your great Name, when so perfect a Stranger to your Person, may savour a little of Rudeness and Irreverence : Yet your Lordship very well knows, that a more refined Acquaintance is attainable with Spirits at a distance, where the divine Idea's of the great Soul have Drawn themselves out

The Epistle Dedicatory.

to the very Life in the visible Characters of their own Excellency, which have not fail'd to dragg after them (as into an easie and pleasing Captivity) the entire Affections and absolute Obedience of others, as the natural Fruit of their Victory. Thus we pay Homage to the very Saints in Heaven, and to all Meritorious and Eminent Persons on Earth, dignifying our selves by frequent and familiar Con- verses with them, though perhaps exalt- ed into mighty Stations, far above the low Sphere of our meanness and humble Estate.

'Tis this Prospect, My Lord, made into the sublimer Forms of your spiritual Part, that hath fix'd me your perfect Captive, and given birth to this bold In- trusion. (But if sometimes the inferior Dependants on the Court Ensure them- selves of a gracious Reception, when they come charg'd but with a Message from

The Epistle Dedicatory.

the Sovereign to you, I am certain you will not shut your Gates against me when I come laden with Expresses from Heaven, and recommended too by the Father of the Faithful, and the very Friend of God.) And tho' it be little to your Lordship to hear of any New Pretender, yet 'tis Complacency enough to me, when I make the World know how much I honour you for your Self ; and with what Pleasure and Satisfaction I received the good News of the Presidency of that Church to be lodged in your Lordship, where my Ancestors with my unworthy self for four Generations successively paid the Tribute of Reverence to its Mitre, now Priding it self in so rich an Head as yours ; unless perchance it be deprived of that Felicity by the Ambition of another, which may emulate its Honour, and think it no robbery to succeed in the same Happiness.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

May your Lordship long live, the true
Heir of Abraham's eximious Faith and
Piety, the pleasing Object of your Princes
Favour, the Peoples Love, and the De-
fire of all the Churches: so Prays

Your Lordships

Most Obsequious Servant,

Steph. Jay.

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REMARKES
ON THE
L I F E
Of the GREAT
Abraham.

C H A P. I.

Abraham's first Call from Idolatry to the Knowledge of the true God. The Encouragements God gives him to follow him. His Obedience to the Call, in leaving his Country. He takes his Father and Family with him. Their Arrival and Stay in Haran : Their Business there. Terah his Father dyes in Haran.

I Shall not reflect on this great Prince as a rough Stone lying unhewn in the Quarry of the Earth, but as a sparkling Diamond polish'd by the Divine hand, and made fit to be set in the Bosom of a God.

Remarques on the Life

The *Chaldeans* (if any) were famous and expert in *Astrology*; *Abraham's* ambition aspired no higher than to get an acquaintance with the Heavens, whose Power and Influences he thought had a great hand in governing the World; he terminates his desires in the *Zenith* of these pleasing Studies, being yet a perfect Stranger (a) to the Omnipotent Power that had fixed those Luminaries in their several Orbs.

Though the Book of the Creature discovers an infinite treasure of Wisdom and Power, and clearly convince of a God; yet is not the Eye so kind a Tutor to the Heart, as to impose its speculations with so great Authority or Success, to work any powerful Impression upon it; but rather taking up with the senses by the way, it finds so pleasing Entertainment there, that Man minds nothing more than what he sees; and the glory of the invisible God becomes perfectly lost in the dazzle and crowd of his visible Creatures.

The Mind of this Great Man was wholly immers'd in them, he admires no Deity but that of his Countrey, 'till by a Miracle of Mercy the Clouds of his Natural Darkness are dispell'd by an extraordinary light of Divine Revelation, that

(a) Writers differ about *Abraham's* Idolatry, some averring that he was never guilty, though God seems to humble his Children with the consideration that their first Father had sinned, which *A Lapid* confesseth to be meant, not of *Adam* only, but *Abraham*: And that of *Joshua* can hardly be answered, *Cap. 24. v. 3.* *Philo* positively concludes him so, before the Divine Call.

Neque eos audire possum qui cum magno conatu Abrahamum ab hoc scelere vindicare nescio quibus argutiis student, quasi non tanto illustrior sit Dei Gratia quâ illum est complexus quanto ipse fuit sceleratior, Masius. In juvenitute Idolotatra erat. Tyrinus.

makes

of the Great Abraham.

3

makes Day in his Soul. Illumination from the Father of lights is so bright and influential upon the Faculties, as fully secure from the danger of Delusion. There is not only light but Assurance attending all the manifestations of God to the Mind. *Abraham* was no Fanatick, to be led by false Fires from his dearest Interests : From this time the flames of *UR* burn darkly in his Eye, he loaths to sacrifice any longer to the Fire, when himself is enkindled by a diviner Spark. *Tradition* tells us, (how true I know not) that being now turned from their Religion, his Countrey-men in rage, threw him into the Fire, for refusing to own their god ; but by miraculous escape he baffled the impotent Deity, and discovered to its Votaries a greater, that had bridled up his natural fury from singeing one Hair of his Head.

This poor Element had the good fortune to be promoted to Honour, from the gross mistake of some, who had either heard or seen it fall from Heaven to consume the Sacrifices of the true Church ; these pass home, and Vote it into (b) *Godship*, perhaps on less improbable Errour, than others since, who contrary to all reason have promoted *Meat* to the same Worship, and *Deifie Bread* instead of a *Saviour*. Indeed the true God hath since fallen from Heaven in immaterial Fire on those holy Tapers, who being first illuminated themselves, were to pass over all the World to enkindle others, baptizing

(b) *Chaldaei & Persæ cum vidissent Olim, igne cælis delapso Patriarcharum sacrificia consumi, putarunt esse Deum.*

them

them into Refinedness and Purity. These Flames feed on nothing but Corruption and Ignorance, they burn invisibly, and this was the holy Fire which now God himself had kindled on the Altar of *Abraham's Heart*.

See from what mighty grounds of Reason and Truth, our kind Mother the *Church* hath faithfully instructed us into the Necessity of God's preventing Grace, which puts an effectual stop to the course of Sin, even while with *Saul* we are posting on in a full career towards Death and Ruine. *Artic. 10.*

Divine Wisdom knows with what *Heifer* Man's Heart is best plowed, 'tis a selfish thing, and plods on little else but its own Interests. God pitying his Infirmities, gratifies his weakness, and falls in with him upon the terms that he sees best please him: He knew this would make good Musick in the Ears of *Abraham*, *I will bless thee, and I will make thee great.* Man will not serve God for nought, though he owes all that he hath and is to Him for his Being. *Abraham*, though pretty well stricken in Years, was yet but a Child in Experience of Spiritual Grace, therefore God dandles him on the Knee, and allures him with the tickling Arguments of a *Great Name* and *Estate*. *We arrive to the Knowledge of Him by degrees, and from a taste of his Goodness in the Creatures, are afterwards brought to live upon Himself in the greatest abundance or want of them.* He knows by what Methods to train us up to perfection. *Abraham* was no vulgar Person, he stood already under very considerable Circumstances in the World: But he that had much should

should yet have more, and he that held his Estate but by the uncertain *Tenure* of general Providence, shall now have his *Copy* enlarged to hold all in *Fee-simple*, from a special donation of Grace. God will hereafter add Sauce to his Meat, and sweeten all his Messes with the Honey of *Canaan*. 'Tis a small thing to be Great, if we hold that Greatness from our selves, and derive it not from the great God; who can make even Death it self (that would else unstrip us into nothing) to be the *Porter* to convey the Robes of a finite Honour into the next World with us, where himself will overlay them with the *Embroideries* of an Infinite Glory.

But *Abraham* lived among his own People in all the delights of Security and Peace, therefore God forestalls his Objection of Danger, and offers him Articles (c) of *Alliance*, wherein he makes over to him the whole *Militia* of Heaven for a Life-guard; (which we shall shortly find him making use of, when he charged the Camp of the four Kings as Lightning, and routed them,) these were to be commanded by his Faith at any time, and that not for himself only, but his Allies too: *Abraham* should have the Aid of a God to lend at his pleasure to his Friends, *I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee*. In what desperate Estate then are the Enemies of the Church, with all their Confederates of Hell, who unite together unto cer-

(c) *Mira Dei benignitas, quod tam familiariter paciscitur cum Abrahamo, hæc enim solennis est fœderum inter Reges & alios formula, ut communes habeant Amicos & Hostes. Vatabl.*

tain Ruine, and band themselves unto Death: *Thus shall it be done unto Abraham whom God delighteth to Honour.*

Tho' Reputation, Riches, and Long life be all that humane Nature can well wish for, (that Ignorantly closes her desires in the supposed felicity of them;) yet *Abraham* whose Soul should relish a greater Sweetness in God, would not think himself sufficiently happy, unless to all these, there be superadded a blessing of that quality, which might secure to him the lasting fruition of that Spiritual pleasure. *We butterly part from Creature Joys, but who that is Wise would want a God?* Temporal things grow Thredbare in the wearing, and wither as Flowers in our Hands; they abate of their Frangrancy, and put us to the Blush for our too great confidence in them. We are obliged to others for our Honour, and Melt away our Treasures to purchase the Aire of their Mouths. Life wasts away its self, and grows ungrateful with long keeping. If *Abraham* will be truly happy, he must have something more than these. There were Princes already in the World that glittered in all the Grandeurs of State; it were a poor thing if a God should put off his Favourite with the fading Flowers of a Crown: No, an Honour shall be contrived for him, brighter than the Sun, which shall display its Beams as far as He, and shed his influences over all the Universe, to make it a fruitful Seminary for Heaven. For in thee *Abraham*, shall all the Families of the Earth be blessed: As if God had said,

There

of the Great Abraham.

7

There shall arise a Glorious Person into the World, compleated (by a Mystical Union of my own Divine Nature and Essence with thy Humane Seed) into a perfect God-man; who shall be the Prince of Peace, Righteousness, and Salvation to thy self, and to all the Children of thy Faith, Obedience and Love, over all the World, and thro' all Ages of it; who shall bless God for Abraham, but much more for that Glorious Son, who shall deliver them from all their Enemies, (Spiritual especially) and shall bless them in turning them away from all their iniquities, drawing them from the cursed estate of Nature and Sin into the free and fearless Service and Fruition of Me their God for ever.

In the former Promises God had affixed to him the Felicities of the Earth; but in this he Marries him to Himself, and gives him a Propriety in that blessing that is derived from the glorious Emanations of his very Essence. Indeed nothing but God himself can make up a perfect Happiness to the Soul. The Spirit of Man is an everlasting Substance, which therefore can be blessed in nothing but an Everlasting God. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee?* The Creatures are nothing without God, but God is every thing without the Creature. 'Twas but the common Sluce of his Bounty that he had hitherto opened to Abraham, here he shews him his very Heart, running out in full Streams of Love and Grace towards him, which hereafter shall break out and divide themselves into all the parts of the Earth, to refresh and rejoyce the Souls of all the Children of his Faith. Now hath Heaven opened a Second time, to ensure the Seed of the Woman that must
break

8 **Remarques on the Life**

break the Serpents Head. God Munites *Abraham* not against the Dangers of the World and Men only, but against Hell and Devils.

Since the Joys of Faith are *Unspeakeable*, and have something of the Nature of those in Fruition, very Glorious. I despair to express the mighty Passions of *Abraham's* Joy. He is all ravished into *Extasie*, and feels, tastes, hears, thinks, rejoyces in nothing but God. Something like this, every true Christian experiences at the First appearance and breaking out of Divine Light, when God first opens the Eyes to behold the Wonders of his Love, and shines in upon the Spirit in the bright Beams of his Grace; the Soul passes out of *Darkness into Marvellous Light*: Which affects it more than all the variety of Objects did Him at the first opening of his Eyes by *Jesus*. This is the Musick and Dancing at the *Prodigal's* meeting with his Father. *Abraham's* Faith pierces through some Thousands of years, and sees already the promised Saviour cloathed in his Flesh, walking up and down amongst his Children, inviting them to come and take share of that Bliss their happy Father enjoyed in Heaven: Now is he perfectly at the disposal of God, and is content to be any thing or nothing, at the good pleasure of his Will.

Tho' Natural Engagements stick fast to us, and our Hearts be close Lockt up in them, and very impatiently suffer a Divulsion, yet such are the commanding Charms of a Divine Beauty beating upon the Soul, that they easily Dissolve the Enchantments by which the Affections are bewitched to the Creatures, and procure not an Enstrangement

ment only but a Cordial Divorcement from them, when reflecting (with an Holy Indignation) on those Dishonourable Prostitutions, (whilest Ignorant or Forgetful of her self) the debased Soul had bowed down to those shameful Embraces.

Chaldea was now no longer a place for a *Federate* of Heaven: *What agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols? He easily parts from his Country, who had first parted from himself.* God having taken *Abraham* into his Bosom, had those Secrets to disclose to him, which he could not so heedfully attend to in his Fathers House, and therefore will draw him to a more proper Place, where he may with greater advantage and convenience give him the demonstration of his Kindness. *Come my Beloved, let us go into the Fields, let us lodge in the Villages, there will I give thee my Loves.* Noise and Hurries distract the Powers of the Soul, which when United are all too little for a God to enjoy. 'Tis in the Night that he gives his Songs, when we are wrapped up in Rest and silence. God is best enjoyed by Sedateness and close Composure of the Affections. *Jesus* himself went into the Mountain to Pray, and in his last Agonies separated from his dearest Disciples. God having pickt out this One friend, 'twas fit he should have him wholly to himself, and resolves to admit no Competitor in his Affections. He was wholly for *Abraham*, and *Abraham* must be wholly for Him; God cannot be held in a divided Heart: 'Tis the Single Eye that penetrates deepest into his Love, he that squints upon any thing else, sees Him not at all. God was all in *Abraham's* Eyes, and there-

therefore finding nothing in his Country wherefore he should desireit any longer, he chearfully passes out of it with a joyful Heart, and hath not the least Reluctancy within him to check the Delights of his glorious Progress.

Behold him giving the necessary Orders to his Family, to get ready for a Journey whence they are never likely to return. *When once we go forth after God, there is no drawing back but to Loss and Perdition.* Sarah is so far from Countermanding her Husband, that she distur-
nishes her Closet with nimble Hands. His Ne-
phew Lot resolves to partake of his Unkles For-
tunes, but old Terah (to whom his Son Abraham
had communicated the Divine Mandate), seems
as forward as the best; his Aged Joynts are in-
vigorated with new Strength, and is the First of
all the Company in a readiness to be gone, which
God takes so kindly from him, that the Honour
of the whole Expedition is devolved upon him
in Holy Writ; and Abraham is led forth by
his Father out of Ur, Gen. *iii.* 21. They pass
lightly away, and care not to spend time in en-
tertaining the Dilatory Complements of the
Town at their departure, to whom they could
give no great Account of their Progress, since
themselves knew not wither they were go-
ing. *Blind Obedience is commendable enough
where God himself is the Guide.* He securely
Travels that hath Light and Truth for his Con-
duct. Divine Presence is a sure Pass-port against
every danger. 'Tis a fair Flower in the Crown
of Abrahams Faith, That He went out, not know-
ing whither he went. With what pleasure did the
Almighty

of the Great Abraham.

11

Almighty God look down on this Glorious Procession, which is ordered all at his special direction! Every Step we make in his ways is delightful to him.

Note here the true Nature of Saving Faith, that willingly departs from the World and Self at the naked Call of God, to follow him on the Foot of his Conduct, whether up to the Mountains of Prosperity and Honour, or down to the Valley of Meanness and Contempt. It moves and is moved at the Motion of the Cloud of his Presence that directs it, and fears not to lose its way, while it is guarded by and keeps close to infallible Truth through every Stage, till at length it arrives at the happy place of its Eternal Fixation and Rest.

'Tis but one Abram that God calls out of Chaldaea, to pass away with his Train from thence, where all the rest tarry behind to be destroyed in their own Idolatrous Fires. Lord, are there but few that shall be Saved? The whole World lies still in Wickedness, and will not awake to the Call of Heaven: Some stir a little, and open an Eye, but heavy with Sleep, shut it down again into fatal Slumber: Others sullenly lie still, while the Call is repeated, and willingly wear the Adders Ears. Some get out of Bed and Dress for the Journey, they make to the Door and shew themselves in their Travelling Posture, when their Neighbours enquiring whither they are hastening, and themselves not able to give an account, are easily laughed out of the design, and soon consent to stay at home. Others more resolutely Cross themselves, and Now to stand to all Adventures, they go abroad and Sail away,

b

but

but they Tack about at the first Storm, and make for Land, glad at their Hearts to set foot again on their Native Shore; therefore the *Fearful* and *Unbelieving* lead the Van of the Damned Crew. 'Tis only the brave *Abram* and the Heirs of his great Soul, that dare cut out their way to *Canaan* through the Gigantick Mountains of difficulties and danger, and can hew the *Sons of Anak* in pieces, to level the *Road* for their more pleasant Passage.

By gentle and easie Processions these holy Pilgrims arrive at last with safety at *Haran*: Where God intending that this noble *Plant of Righteousness* should appear somewhat like himself in the Kingdom of *Canaan*, and not as a low contemptible *Shrub*, gives him here for a while a Rooting time; that he might grow up into all the Dimensions of a *Stately Cedar*. Here therefore the Womb of the Divine Promise begins to swell, and be prolific; *Abraham* already feels its productive Vertue, and soon experiences what an advantageous Change he had made of his God, who seems to call the Creatures together, and commands them to give their Attendance upon him as another Lord of the Creation, next and immediately under himself. 'Tis God that directs the *Flight of Riches and Honour*, they are mov'd by him to take Wing, and to pass away from such as abuse them, and themselves by them; so they are ordered to lie to others that know how to give them more generous Entertainment. The Treasures of *Charran* sigh for lodging in *Abraham's* Coffers, and confederate together to revolt from their Idolatrous Masters.

of the Great Abraham.

13

to offer their Service to the true Heir; yea, the Inhabitants are Proud to present them as a grateful Acknowledgment of the sence they had of that Honour he had done them in blessing their City with his Presence. And surely had *Abraham* drain'd their Exchequer by an Offering of their whole *Town-stock* to him, yet should they have little cause to repine, since God himself hath made ample Payment, with all the Arrears of Interest to their Successors there, by giving up the Superstitious (*d*) *Saracens* to the Vanity of exposing themselves to the expence of a long Pilgrimage (in whole Troops together) to this City, there to pour out their Devotions in the very place which they thought the Sacred Presence of *Abraham* and *Sarah* had *Hallowed* all into Chappel, and out of which they fancy to be heard with greater expedition and success. Whatever they gained by their Prayers, the City is no loser by the *Votaries*, and doubtless found it their Interest, concernedly to maintain them in their Error, and to flatter them sufficiently in the continuance of that Zeal that was so profitable to them.

While his Servants Generate and Multiply in his Family, *Abraham* and *Sarah* are no less employed in a work of a more blessed Increase. They who were as yet unsuccessfull in the Act of Natural Generation, were not unprosperous in the Regeneration of Souls unto God. They erect

(d) Locum nunc honorant Saraceni quod ab Abrahamo fuit honoratus eoque precandi causa accedunt ait Benjamin. Grot.

a *Divinity School*, and daily *Lectures* are kept up in it. In this happy Employment they pass away their time in *Haran*; and make it their business to Sow the Seed of Divine Truth into many a *Charronites* Heart. 'Tis very confidently delivered by their Learned *Posterity*, that not only *Abraham* was a diligent instructor of the *Men*, but his (e) Lady also undertook it as her *Province* to woe those of her Sex to embrace the Worship of the true God, whom she presented (as the happy *Issue* of her *Soul*, and knew yet no other *Travel*) to her *Abraham*, to be admitted into the Communion of the *Church in his House*, and adopted into all the Priviledges of his *Spiritual Daughters*. Wonder not then, that their Train is encreased, and these Children of their *Faith* have Zeal and Strength enough to leave all their interest in *Haran* to wait on their holy Parents into *Canaan*.

All these had God given him in Exchange for a *Father* whom he here thinks fit to take to himself. The good Old *Terah*, who had followed him hitherto, falls here; whose *Funeral* he Solemnizes with a becoming Gravity and Sadness, and withdraws himself to Weep in Secret, lest by yielding too much to Passion, he betrayes the Honour of his Faith and Religion. Grief (tho' Natural) is some kind of Debasement of the *Soul*, forgetting her self, in stooping to every petty Cross, in the Nonage of her *Infant Estate*.

(e) Tenent Hebrai Abram viros, Saram mulieres, in Dei cultu instituisse, atque ita eos Deo procreasse. Fagius.

but growing up to the knowledge of her Princely Birth, she draws that holy Sweetness from her high *Relation* to God, as soon makes her clear up again, to fortifie her self against all the weaknesses that dissolve her. 'Twere *Treason* against *Abraham's* dutiful Piety to dispute his conscientious Care in confirming his Father in all the comforts of the *Promised Seed*, that should one day spring from his *Blood*, for the perfection of his Happiness in the future World. God that knew *Abraham's* Faithfulness in the teaching of his *Children and Household*, might well trust him in the discharge of his Duty to his dearest Parent: Who by the same Arguments that he prevailed with him to forsake his *Country*, might be easily wrought to forget and abjure any *Confidence* in the vain *Idols* he had served there. Happy *Terah* in such a Son, who became the Parent of his Father's better Life, and the blessed *Instrument* of his Eternal Salvation. Complements of *Seniority* are vainly insisted on in the greater concern of Endless Happiness: Nor do we find the *Old Man* peevishly pushing away his *Son* from him, with the Phlegmatick *Objections* of the *Novelty* of his Religion, or angerly pleading for the *Antiquity* of his own: 'Tis well if by any means, and at last we arrive at the *Saving Knowledge*. Methinks I see him humbly bowing his hoary Head to the God who vouchsafed to *Catechise* him by the Lips of his own Child. He gratefully Embraces the Promise, Dies in the Hopes and Apprehensions of it, and is waisted by a shorter cut into the Heavenly *Canaan*; *Abraham* commends his Spirit into the Hands and Mercy of the

Father of it by humble Supplications, and did so well improve the Lesson of his Parents *Morality*, as never to forget in his greatest Height and Strength, that he himself was *Dust*. *Your Fathers where are They?* The Children of the Bed-chamber cannot Mourn, so long as the Bridegroom is with them. Abraham's holy Heart was so full of God, that he hath little room left for Sorrow. Yet doth not *Religion* teach us *Stoicism*, (for *Jens Wept*) but excellently directs us to Regulate and Moderate our Natural Passions, which little prevail when Divine Joy prepossesses the Soul: How hardly then are Tears wrung out? Therefore Grief and Pain have no place in Heaven, where the Spirit is swallowed up in its Masters Joy.

CHAP. II.

Abraham removes out of Haran into Canaan. God welcomes him into the Land that he had promised to shew him: Which is sealed to his Children by Promise. He returns thanks, and sets up the true Religion there. A Famine arises, and he is forced to remove into Egypt; where he denies his Wife thro' fear. She is taken from him by the King, whom God plagues for the Rape. They are dismissed, and return again into Canaan.

THe dayes of Mourning for his Father being expir'd, view we now the great Patriarch dislodging again in a suitable Magnificence and State.

State. Every Motion of the Ark of God is Remarkable. Great Princes tread with Majesty. Nor was there a greater upon Earth than Abraham, who was every day growing up to be the Mighty Pillar on which God would build his Church, that must stand for ever.

'Twas in the Seventy fifth Year of his Age that he passed out of Haran, not without the special Order of God, who now without further delay leads him down by the land into Canaan: This was that good Land which he had promised to shew him. God never disappoints our hopes that are grounded on his own Word. His Eyes doubtless are greatly surprized with the pleasing Prospects of that goodly Countrey. Heaven will be infinitely better than what we are able to conceive of it here below; when we shall see it with our Eyes, we shall confess that half of its glory was not conveyed to our Ears. Abraham travels on, till he arrives at the pleasant Plains of Morah, adorned with a delightful Grove of stately Oaks; here he hath the honour of another Visit from Heaven; God welcomes him into Canaan. So far is he from tiring our Faith, that he loves to refresh it with the sweet repasts of his gracious Presence; he will not give ground of suspicion by too tedious absence from his Abraham, that he had drawn him out of his Countrey to his loss. God is every where present to the eyes of our Faith, but sometimes more sensibly to the joy and rejoycing of our Heart: I will manifest my self to him: A Mercy that the Stranger intermedleth not with. God never comes emp-

ty handed to his Servants, but brings that with him that shall make up his Entertainment and Welcome; he knows that Man hath nothing worthy of Himself, and therefore expects nothing from him but an open and thankful Hand and Heart to receive his Kindness: *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.* Were our Faith so great and large as to comprehend the vast extensions of his Bounty, we might fetch down Heaven into our bosoms: 'Tis our weakness and incapacity that puts him on feeding us (as Infants) with such scanty drops of his Fulness: Our barren Hearts might otherwise break out into thousands and ten thousands of ravishing Pleasures and Joys, which the narrowness of our spirits do now most unhappily deprive us of.

Thus full fraught with Blessings appears God unto *Abraham*, and brings down with him a *Conveyance* of all the Kingdoms of *Canaan* to him and his Heirs for ever. Indeed the *Tenants* were not to be thrown out of Possession presently, but the Estate should be as certain to him as if It were already in hand: The poor *Slaves* that had it, were to be spared for some time, 'till they had dressed it up into a more delightful Habitation for his Children. They had forfeited their *Copies* already into his hands, and he might dispose of them at his own pleasure; yet will he be so gracious as not too rigorously or hastily to make his *Entry*, 'till he try whether they would submit themselves; and if not, he will yet wait for his Goodness sake, and so should *Abraham* for the Promise sake: And though they would pay him but little *Ac-*
know-

knowledge as their great Landlord, yet should his Posterity fill their Exchequers with the Ar-rears, and bring such Writs of Ejectment with them as should very feafibly root them out of their Estates and Lives together.

The wickedest Men have a civil Right to all they enjoy, from the Title of general Providence ; and though themselves weaken it by their unsufferable Provocations, and sin themselves out of doors, yet it is not for Man to take the Forfeiture without Orders from above. Those who violate the Proprieties of others on the bare pretence of a greater Interest in God, and break open their Houses without a Warrant from Heaven, may chance at the Assizes to be found guilty of that Riot which will shame and confound the pretenders for ever. Since God hath confirmed the Grant in Heaven, and sent it down to be proclaimed by the Mouth of a very Beast ; Am not I thine Ass ? To teach us, that they who dispute it, are greater Brutes than he.

But what Man *must* not, God *may* do ; He is the Judge who putteth down one to set up another in his stead. The Most High ruleth in the Kingdoms of Men, and giveth them to whomsoever he will, yet never by unrighteous Sentence ; for he tempereth his Justice with so much Lenity and Patience, that he shameth Offenders into a blushing Confession of their own Guilt and Madness, and leaveth it to themselves to consider, how little he hath contributed to their Ruine.

The Inheritance is Promised, but where is the Heir ?

Heir? Where, but lying Dormant in the Womb of the same Promise. Abraham must wait for both; He that believeth doth not make haste. God worketh every thing by the leisurely degrees of his Wisdom and Will. He that made all things to start up out of nothing at the first, could have easily healed the defect of Sarah's Womb, and made her a present Mother of Generations; whereas yet must she wait five and twenty Years longer for one Son: But God ever acts according to the wise Purposes of his own Council, and what is Man that he should Anticipate the Decrees of the Almighty? Let Abraham live a while upon the Naked Promise, which is therefore so often repeated to him again and again, that he might feed afresh upon the Sweets of its Assurance, and every time he looked up to Heaven and saw the Stars, or down on the Earth to behold the little Dusts thereof, or passing to the Sea might view the sands, should from all these be put in mind of the Goodness of his God, who had secur'd him a Posterity as innumerable as these, and all to proceed from a barren Womb, the Work of that God only that calleth those things that (yet) be not, as if they were.

We are shut up in unfruitful Nature and Unbelief, and nothing can open us unto God but Himself: could we believe aright with Abraham, from our very Sterility and Nothingness would start up such a Progeny of Graces and Comforts, which an Eternity should never see extinct.

Abraham bows, and believes, and bows again, and can never enough admire the infinite-

niteneſs of the Love of his God, to him : He raiſes up Altars, and ſends up his thankful Heart in the ſmoak of his Sacrifices : Every place where he paſſes is perfum'd with his Incenſe, and God ſmells the ſweet ſavour of it from above. *Great is the correſpondency of the grateful Heart with Heaven. Seven times a day do I praiſe thee.*

But does *Abraham* remember where he is ? Is not his Zeal above his Diſcretion ? The *Canaanite* was yet in the Land, and what makes him thus bold to invade the Countrey, and bring in a Religion with him ſo perfectly different from all theirs ? He finds them a fierce and cruel People, *inflaming themſelves with their Idols.* 'Tis ſtrange he did not ſmother his own in a politick Concealment, and more prudently have conſulted his ſecurity : No, but with a Courage and Undauntedneſs, great as his Heart, he dares own the Truth, and the God of it, in the Faces of them all. He charges the Devil in his own Quarters, and ſets up an *Ark*, before which he knew all the *Dagons* of the Countrey muſt one day fall. *Fearleſneſs and Courage for God is the natural fruit of a lively Faith. Confession muſt be open and valorous : He that is aſhamed of me, of him will I be aſhamed.* *Abraham* knew the God with whom he was in League, was ſufficiently able to defend him. What are the combined Policies and Forces of Men, that cannot move a Joynt any further than as commiſſionated by the firſt *Mover*, whom *Abraham* had ſecured to himſelf ! He that hath a God to truſt in, and fears what Man can do againſt

against him, deservedly forfeits his Pretence and Hope in the Almighty Protection. *Flesh may recoil a little, but Faith stands its ground and is safe.* Having therefore the Grant of the whole Kingdoms so surely confirmed to him from Heaven, he passes up and down the Countrey as their Prince, and makes his Kingly Progress with a Breast devoid of all fear, which he leaves to torment the bosoms of those who were perfectly *Strangers* to his God. Would we keep Heaven in our Eye, and our Hopes clear and unblotted upon our Heart, we might follow him with the same Gallantry of Spirit through all the Territories of the Sons of the Gyant, and pass from pleasure to pleasure. *Faith is a prying Grace, and narrowly surveys the Map of the celestial Canaan, to make discovery of those joyful Mansions which our hope tells us are as secure to us, as if already we were in possession, (through Grace) by the Vertue of the same Covenant that God sealed to Abraham.*

While this Great Prince is thus recreating himself in the variety of the pleasurable Prospects of *Canaan*, he is surprized by a discovery of a *Leanness* that appeared upon the face of the *Fields*, such as might well make way for Jealousie to arise within him of its natural Fertility and Goodness. Alas! God had lock'd up the Womb of Nature that was productive enough of it self: It was *He that called for a Famine, and brake the whole Staff of Bread*: This fruitful Land is made barren for the Wickedness of them that dwell therein: Even *Canaan* yields not her Increase, and *Abraham* must learn the Lesson, that

that *Man liveth not by Bread alone.* When God stops his Ear, and hears not the *Heavens*, they must not hear the *Earth*, nor the *Earth* the *Corn*. In vain do Men Plant and Water, where God withdraws the Blessing. Manna still falls from Heaven by the immediate hand of his Providence. Substract but the Divine Influence, and the whole Earth turns Desert; you may *Plow* the *Rocks* with the same hopes of Increase. Men distractedly *Sacrifice to their own Net and Dragg*: All means are subservient to the supreme Will of God, who although he ordinarily works by them, and sometimes without them, yet not always with them, and then all means are vain. We must endeavour because he hath Commanded, and hope for a Blessing because he hath Promised; but if that fail, it is because we have sinned, and sin too frequently stops up the common current of his Goodness, that it cannot flow down upon us in such full streams of Bounty as it would: *Your Iniquities, O ye Canaanites, have turned away, and withholden good things from you.* God shoots his *Evil Arrow* of Famine into the heart of the Land, he is already beginning to weaken their strength, and shewing his *Abraham* by what variety of Means he could beat down all their proud Confidence and Power: His Children should have no impossible task to obtain Possession, since he hath other Weapons to spend upon them besides the Sword: He could famish them all into *Skeletons*, and make them drop down before him as Dead Men. It is confidently averred, that this *Famine* was sent only as another Try-
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Egypt. The Church is ever in Motion, as the Sun, darting out her quickning Beams and Light. What is Life it self but a tossing too and fro, by alternate motions, into variety of Objects and Events. Who would not think the *Princes* of the Earth incomparably more happy than *Abraham*? who fix'd in the *Orbs* of their Majesty and Grandeur, had little else to do than to play with the *Leviathan* in the wide Ocean of exchanged Pleasures, and to glide from Joy to Joy; while the good *Patriarch* oppress'd with Famine and Want, is forced to travel to seek his *Bread*; and yet was he the only *Golden Pot*, which was brim-full with spiritual *Manna*, while all They as poor Earthen Pitchers run over only with the deadly *Pottage* of their own *Seething*, and at last are broken in pieces together, when himself is lodged in the perpetual *Ark*. 'Tis ill judging of the Churches Complexion while she is sullied in the smoak of the Afflicting Furnace. No Man knoweth either Love or Hatred by all that is before him.

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is going down thither for Bread, and now is afraid to be swallowed himself. *Beauty is but dangerous luggage in the way of our pilgrimage*; for prevention of the danger, he contrives to strengthen the *silver Cord of his Life*, by loosening the golden Bands of his *Marriage*. Sarah that had consented long ago to become his *Wife*, must now write the *Bill of her own Divorce*, and consent again to be his *Sister*; he *Wooes* her a second time to disown him as an *Husband*, and the poor *Lady* must hide her *Wedding Ring* in her Bosom, lest it Wedd her *Lord* to his *Grave*. Could *Abraham* have removed the wrinkles that this fear hath fixt on the fair Face of his beautiful *Faith*, and plac'd them in the *Forehead* of his *Sarah*, 'tis probable the *Egyptians* might not have had that Appetite to her, as that for her sake he should dread to be kill'd, — *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my Father had not dyed*. Why did not *Sarah* take his *Mantle* from him, and smite asunder these *Waters of Jealousie*, crying, *Where is the Lord God of Abraham*, who useth to part these *Waves of danger* *hither and thither*, and cause them to fly before us to make a *safe path* through them all to tread on? If a *Quail* of Fear came over his Heart, she had done but her Duty as a good *Wife* to have presented him with a *Cordial*, which soon had recovered him into a Spirit again; *In thee Abraham shall all the families of the Earth be blessed*. Must that *Blessing* blossom from thy *Ashes*? (†) But where is the *Jewel* that hath no flaw, and the *Ench* that

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is void of all fear? We must seek it in Heaven, where perfect Love casteth it out. Famine had driven him down hither, and fear surprises him here! We must forget that we are in the World, if we promise our selves security from Troubles in it.

Abraham is not deceived in the Egyptians, that which he feared is come upon him; no sooner is he entered into the Land, but every Mouth is chanting out the Encomiums of the Beautiful Stranger. They gaze on her as on some Auspicious Deity, that was arrived to scatter her Divine Influences over all the Kingdom. The News hastily flies to Court; think with what little pleasure, the Queen and all her Train of Ladies receive it, as the Rising of another Sun in their Horizon, that will Eclipse them all into perfect Obscurity. The (*) Parasite Princes (despairing to Enjoy her themselves) joyntly vote her to the Honour of the Royal Bed. They vie with each other, who should Sing the Panegyriks of her Praise, with greatest advantage into the Ears of the King, whose Amorous Passions are soon blown up into Flame, by so pleasing Breath. Nuncio's are dispatched to Abraham, who Solicite the suit in the Mighty Name of Majesty. Imperial Mandates are too absolute to admit a denial, but least of all in the Affairs of Love. Now must Abraham hazard the Chastity of his Wife for the Security of his Head, and whence he might have expected

(*) Solent Aulici etiam lenocinio gratiam Regum quarere.

the greatest Protection, there he finds his greatest Danger. Yet, while himself owns her but as a *Sister*, and denies her as a *Wife*, he *Legitimizes* the Rape, and her own silence makes it still the less Criminal. How great were the contests of Love and Fear conflicting together in her Breast, is better imagined than expressed. There are some Passions that Letters and Words are too weak to Decipher. But what bright Ray is this that I discover gilding the Cloud, and Shining thro' all the Storm into the Heart of the Great Abraham? Can we think that he so tamely parts with his dearest Lady, to offer her up a Sacrifice to the Lust of a Pagan, from a principle of base Cowardise? What meaner Spirit values a Life to preserve his Honour, and will not rather suffer a Thousand deaths, than survive a despicable Monument of Shame and Scorn? Jealousie is the rage of a Man, and he will not spare in the day of Vengeance: and should not Sarah have kneeled, and begged him to dispatch her out of Life with his own Hands, rather than thus to prostitute her Glory to an Eternal Ignominy that could never be wip'd off? Whence is it then, that they so easily separate, and she seems to pass from him as if she had been after another Lover in the Court of Egypt? Ah no! Abraham had recovered himself into a better temper of Mind, and stronger sense of his safety, and delivers up his (†) Wife to

(†) Dea pudicitiam tuam custodire potest, teque illam conservare, confido enim in Deo meo quod hoc fieri non patietur.

Perus.

the *King*, with the same Confidence as afterwards he offered up his *Son* unto God, with a certain assurance of that Infinite Wisdom and Power, that could find ways enough to prevent the Violation of his *Sarah's Chastity*. And she herself doubtless had confirmed Him into all the Confidences of her Fidelity, that the long *Experience* of her *Goodness*, *Constancy*, and earnest *Affections* to so worthy a Lord could affix upon him. Well might she be ravished from his Bosom into *Pharaoh's House*, but she doubted not God would provide her an *Innocent Lodging* there, without being forced within his *Curtains*.

In Confidence therefore of Divine Protection, *Abraham* surrenders her up to the Court. The Heart of her Husband doth safely trust in her: Princes do every thing in State, they pass with considerate Steps, even into the Bed of Love: *Motions of Majesty are Deliberate*; 'tis below *Kings* to Violate or be Rough. They are losers by Violence, while they know there is little pleasure in constrained Embraces. *Amnon* loaths, and Bolts out the Lady that he had Ravished. A little Patience ripens the Flower of their Desires, which Precipitancy vainly Crops in the Bud; and we know *Monarchs* Woe by Proxy, which yields great advantage to delay and excuse. And doubtless *Sarah* had Arts enough to shift off too close Applications that were made by the Courtiers in the behalf of their Master, or by Him for himself. *Abraham* is courted too, and caressed with all the Complements of Endearment. Each Officer cringes to him, as to the Rising Favourite, and a Growing Ally to the Crown; the King himself

self treats him with that *Courtesie* as might most powerfully win him to his Interest: He obliges him to favour his *Suit* by all possible demonstrations of his Royal Bounty, which *Abraham* most gratefully returns to his *Courtiers*, to whom (if we may believe *Josephus*) he became a *Tutor*, and taught them a Nobler Science than the Art of Love, bringing them to Doat on the *Beauty* of the *Heavens*, which far exceeded that of his *Wife*. And some of them (as *Chrysostom* thinks) to the knowledge of that *God* who had fixed the Lusture upon them.

A *Jewish* Tradition makes us believe, that *Sarah* had a *Tutelar Angel* sent her from God, to secure her from all the Assaults of this Tyrant, who, upon every rising of his Lust and Hot desires, would strike him into so perfect an *Impotency* as forced him to pass from her *Chamber* with the shame and vexation of an *Eunuch*, laden only with the *Spoils* of his frustrated Hopes, instead of those of her Honour, while her self stands *Laughing* (as her Children afterwards) on the *Shore* of security and freedom; when this *Pharaoh*, venturing to pursue her, hath the Heels of his eagerness tript up, and is sent to cool his Flames in a *Watery Bed*.

'Twas indeed from a Power unconquerable as her Own, Steel'd with a *Spirit* wholly Divine, that she gloriously stood the *Shock*, and baffled all the *Attagues* that were made upon her *Vertue*; till at last God pitying this Noble *Free-woman*, in Bondage here under the *Tyranny* of this impious *Prince*, and hearing from above the *Sighings* of the *Prisoner*, was resolved to knock off the Shackles

of her Captivity, with such an *Hammer* as shall make the Foundation of her Prison to shake, and the *Keepers* thereof to *Tremble*. A Cloud of Indignation Condenses over their Heads, and falls down in a shower of Plagues upon them. The whole *Court* is under Horrour, and Labours under Diseases and perfect Confusion. The happy *Pair* are in Ease and Safety, while That is under Consternation and Disorder. Some say, the *Magicians* are consulted, to enquire into the Causes of the Wrath of Heaven; others, that *Sarah* herself is re-examined from the Jealousie they harboured of her nearer Relation to *Abraham*. Indeed she knew her self (as *Jonah*) the procuring cause of the *Storm*, and that a little time might blow Her into *Harbour* and Safety. They all grow Sick of the New *Mistress*, and would gladly send her packing for calm Weather again; themselves with her another *Lover*, and would gladly pay a Priest to Marry her a Second time into *Abraham's Bosom*; and possibly they might save that labour, for the *Sister* may be the *Wife* already. God had sent down from Heaven an ample *Certificate* of the *Marriage*, which they might read but too plainly in *Characters* of Judgment. *Sarah* (as some say) upon Examination confesses the whole, and now (if at any time) had *Abraham* just ground to fear; but God had secured him from the fright, for if they were thus Plagued for the guilt but of an Unlawful desire to his *Wife*, what should they be, if they lay violent Hands on her *Husband*.

There is a certain Divine *Appearance* of Majesty seated in the very *Commencement* of the truly God-

ly, and shining there in so clear a Light, as never fails to strike Terror into the Hearts of prophane Men: A Spirit of Glory resting upon them, that melts the Drossie Spirits of the wicked, who are made to fall before it, and yield that due Veneration and Reverence as greatly tends to their Honour, and happy Security from danger; so that the hand of Cruelty wants an Heart to offer a rude Touch to Gods Anointed, or to do his Prophets Harm. It was this Venerable Aspect sitting on the Brow of the Great Abraham, from whose Eyes darted the Lightning that Pierced the Breast of this Egyrian King, and dissolv'd him from his Natural Ferocity, into so Meek and gentle a Temper, that instead of the Thunder of Wrath we might have expected to have rattled from his furious and incensed Spirits; we find nothing but the still small Voice of a soft and weaker rebuke; *Why saidst thou, She is my Sister? It is God that turns the Hearts of Kings whither soever he will.* Methinks I see the Blood that under the first Temptation had passed from Abraham's Cheeks to guard his Heart, and left him Pale with Fear, now returning all back again, making him blush with Shame. Nor could he in Civility do less than wear the same Livery with the King, whose Face is dipt into the same Scarlet, and blusheth as deep as he, from the Conscience of so great an injury done by him to the Lady of so Mighty a Personage as Abraham.

'Tis strange this Fallacy had not wrought to greater Vengeance. Princes seldom brook the Affronts made upon their Reputations or Affections. 'Tis but Sport and Recreation to them to Revenge them-

themselves, especially where there is not a proportionable Strength for Defence, and where too, there is nothing but *Nature* to check its Fury and Rage. But *the Lord was there*, and the whole Court was under the Sores of his Wrath, who therefore Politickly consult rather the more safe and generous way of heaping up Coals of Fire upon the Head of Her that had enflam'd their Prince, than by any injurious usage to provoke greater Flames on themselves.

And the Monarch is content to pay well for his Liquorish Longing, who thinks it Bargain good enough if he buy off his Guilt with the price of those liberal Presents, which he sacrifices as *Trespass-offerings* to *Abraham*, which he hopes will satisfie for the Sin of his Ignorance; after which received, he has Audience of leave and free Liberty to depart, who passes from the Court with his Lady in his hand, a Greater Man than when he came in. We must not forget the Kings last kindness in giving severe Orders to the Guards for their intire security, making it little less than *Treason* for any Subject to profane the Shrine himself had so religiously adored. And surely all but need, while he providently foresaw how the common People could easily expound their greatest Insolencies into good Service to their Prince, when they heaped them on those only who had been the instrumental cause of so many plagues and mischiefs to him, (as they think). *Vulgar eyes* (looking no higher than the bloody Effects of the Judgment) are perfectly blind from any Penetration into the first procuring Cause. Had *Pharaoh's Heart* bin as innocent

as *Sarah's Eyes*, they had never felt the vigour of Gods displeasure upon them.

The *Church* hath bin ever indeed a *Burthensome Stone* to the Wicked, who making all their force to heave and lift at it, have found not their *Shins* crackt only, but their *Heart-Strings* broken with the weight of it. *Whosoever hath fallen on this Stone, hath bin broken, but on whomsoever it hath fallen, it hath ground him into powder.* *Abraham* travelled into *Canaan*, because they gave him so cold a welcome; behold a *Famine* on themselves, from thence he passed into *Egypt*, where they plague him by the Rape of his Wife; behold a *Disease* on themselves: See *Haman* hanging on the Gallows prepared by himself for *Mordecai*, and an hundred fourscore and five thousand *Carkases* spread as *Dung* on the Fields of *Jerusalem*, who threatned to make the *Inhabitants* eat their own: *All that burthen themselves with this Stone, shall be cut in pieces, tho' all the People of the Earth be gathered together against it. Wherein they deal proudly, God is above them.*

Abraham doubtless had Impaired his Stock by the *Famine* of *Canaan*, and now he abundantly recruits it in the Court of *Egypt*; he was afraid to lose his *Life*, where now he augments his *Estate*. His *Wifes Face* had not bin more pleasant than now profitable unto him: instead of being kill'd for Her sake, he lives and is enriched by her. By what strange means doth the *Church* sometimes thrive and prosper! The good Father went down into *Egypt* but to receive the first *Fruits* of those Spoils, which hereafter his Grand-children shall lade themselves out with, when

when in the like Affright the *Egyptians* consent to be robbed by them.

Behold we Him now retreating, replenished with Treasure and Joy, he leaves nothing behind him but the *Infelicity* of his Diffidence in his God, and could willingly part again with *Pharaoh's* Presents to have purchas'd off the remembrance of his *Weakness* and Shame. The *best Men* are most sensible of their least Failings, and are most deeply humbled under them, while fools make a mock of Sin, and think to Jeer away their Consciences and Guilt together. God certainly left him here to Trip, for our Instruction: And *Abraham* did that which was right in the Eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life; save only in the matter of his Sister: Yet hath he not wanted *Advocates* pleading so well for him, that in this also he is made Innocent, and little fault found in him: to which may be added this, That he receives no Reproof at all from Heaven. The best use we can make of it, is to learn where to look for Perfection. I pity their vanity, who pretend to have their Houses of Clay dress'd up with the furniture of the next World, when the Father of the Faithful hath nothing to boast of but what he receives from God.

By daily Regresses he now passes back into *Canaan*, where by this time the Staff of Bread that broke under his hand, was increased into many Bands of Plenty. He proceeds to the Confines of *Bethel*, which he had made Eminent by his first Altar, there erected unto God; which he reverently repairs again to offer up those Sacrifices of Thanksgiving, which in Clouds of Perfume shall

shall give publick Testimony how much his gratefull Heart was inflamed with a most lively Resentment of Gods stupendious Goodness towards Him and his dearest Wife, in their miraculous Deliverance from all the dangers of the Egyptian-Court: And he is glad to do it in this place where God had answered him from Heaven already. The very Spot where divine Appearances are made, is exceedingly delightful and affecting. Alas, thine Altars, my King and my God? How then should we be ravished with the remembrance of that happy place, where we shall one day praise him for ever.

CAP. III.

The Dissention between Abrahams Hersdmen and Lot's. The ensuing separation. God appears to comfort and confirm Abraham in the Promise of Canaan. Lot passeth to Jordan. A War arises. The Sodomites are vanquish'd; and the City ransackt. Lot is carried away Prisoner.

LOT the Son of Haran, the Brother of Abraham, had been the comfortable Companion of his Travels from his first departure out of UR: Therefore had God blessed him, and made him a great Sharer in the Mercies of the Covenant. He is increased to that degree of Greatness in Wealth, and Substance with his Uncle, that now their Cohabitation is rendred incompatible any longer.

longer. *Lots* Eyes could not be so short-sighted, as not apparently to find, how *Good it was for him to be here*; and how much he had profited by his dutiful respect to his *Fathers Brother*, who had been more than a *Father* to him. He resented the *Mercy*, I hope, with a better heart, than that *Atheistical Gown-man*, who since cried out, *Quantum nobis profuit hac Fabula de Christo!* How much *Wealth* hath this *Story of a Christ* brought us! *Poverty* sometimes parts good Company, but here *Riches*. And though themselves agreed together in all the *Principles* of Faith and Religion, yet the very *Cattel* necessitate a *Schism*, and the only Quarrel is between the *Shepherds*, who studied more the Bellies of the *Sheep*, than their Masters happy Communion and Peace. It were well if the *Pastors* of the *Christian Flock* had divided on no other Motives than Zeal for the good of the *Sheep*. There are *Herdsmen*,* who while they swagger for the Interest of the *Flock*, engross the whole Pasture to themselves, and leave the poor *Sheep* to bite on such hard *Oarts* which they cannot swallow nor digest; they lead them from the *green Pastures* of infallible *Truth*, and the pleasant *Waters* of unspeakable *Comfort*, to make them couch in the barren *Wilderness* of Uncertainties, and the dry *Heath* of unprofitable *Errors* and *Vanity*.

The wise *Abraham* not minding to espouse the *Fewds* of his Servants, thinks fit in time to prevent a growing *Dissention* in his Household; by a prudent giving way to the present necessity, resolves rather to take leave of his *Nephew*, than his *Peace* and quiet. He cannot tell

into

into what Combustion these quarrelsome Fellows might throw his *Family*; and therefore he Addresses his *Kinsman* with such fair Proposals, as should quickly depress the Flame, and evidently shew him the true Nobleness of the Mind from whence they arise. *The strongest Christian, is ever the truest Gentleman*, who is happy in a natural Facility and sweet Condescension of Spirit, which on every occasion so becomingly passes from him, to command a Power over the *Affections* of all that observe him. He keeps the *Gates* of his *Soul* ever open as a passage for self to walk out at, when a weaker Faith bolts it self in, and cannot so easily Sacrifice its Interests to the Honour of *Peace* and *Truth*. *Princes* scorn to spend a thought on the petty pretences which meaner *Subjects* pursue with Heat and Passion. The Great *Abraham* casts all the *Rights* of his *Supremacy* into the Arms of his *Nephew* at once, with License to dispose of them at his own Pleasure, and generously offers him to rest satisfied with the *Refuse* of the Countrey which himself should not please to make choice of.

The Grum *Lot*, who should have lowly bowed to his *Uncle*, and by a Scarlet Cheek, made sign how sensibly he resented that unusual Generosity of *Abraham*, and very humbly begg'd his excuse; is so far from that, as he thinks it not policy to return back the Complement, but rudely takes him at his Word, (*) and all in an Hurry prepares to depart, having first cho-

(*) Nota modestiam Abrahami, et parum Loti gratum animi, quod ei non reliqueris Optionem. Estius.

sen his own Apartments on the fruitful Plains of Jordan.

How often are the unlovely knots of an ill disposition too visibly discovered thorough all the varnish of a fair Profession: Yea Grace it self is not so Victorious to make a thorough Conquest over all the Clowneries of Nature. Lot was surely a Good Man; yet had his Goodness been more Conspicuous, had it been so happy to have shined thro' the Attendant Lustre of a greater Civility and Gratitude to his Uncle, by whose means alone, and for whose sake he had grown up into all his Dimensions of Wealth and Greatness.

Good Nature bears so near a Resemblance to Grace, as one must weep to think of a lovely Titus his going to Hell; and Ill Nature is so like to Corruption, that one must admire the Mercy that ever receives it to Heaven. Civility without Grace, may temper up for a fine Gentleman; when Grace without Civility makes but a crabbed Christian.

And certainly Lots undutifulness is written very legibly in the Characters of his Punishment; for while he greedily gazes on the Pleasantness and Amenity of the Cities of the Plain, and the Commodiousness of the Fields for his Flocks, without Counter-ballancing in his mind the Inconveniences of a Neighbourhood, so very wicked and profane, he utterly betrays the sweet Comfort and Happiness of his Life, electing himself into a perpetual succession of Sorrows and Woes.

Were it Lot's Case only that parted from Abraham, on the Account of Brutes, we might easily pardon it to him, and pass from the place without

without a *Tear*, or sympathizing much with the *Sorrows* of their *Separation*: But when we every day find the greatest part of Mankind breaking off from the participation of the *Eternal Felicity* of *Abraham's Bosom*, from no other *Motives* than the *Gratification* of *Beastial Appetites*, and *sensual Lusts*, that destroy their *Peace* and *Souls* together; this is a *Sorrow* that fetches *Tears* into the *Eyes* of a *God*, who in a *doleful* sence of that *Madness*, cryed out in fear of the *small remnant*, *Will you also go away?*

Lot is no sooner departed from *Abraham*, but the loss is made up to him by another *Visit* of *God* from *Heaven*. *The seasonableness* of *Mercies* make them doubly sweet and welcome to us. *Natural Affections* work most sensibly in those who are most *Holy* and *Spiritual*; when wicked men that are without them, are perfectly *Stocks* and *Stones*: He could not but be very grievously afflicted with the loss of Him that was so near and dear unto him, *With whom he took sweet Counsel*, and who was one in all the *Service* of *God* with him. *David* bitterly bemoans the failure of his *Familiars*: *Lover and Friend hast thou put away far from me, and mine Acquaintance into darkness*. *God* considering his *Affliction*, comes to extinguish it with the *unspeakable Comfort* of his own *Gracious Presence*. *How do all our earthly Sorrows* pass away as the *Clouds* of the *Morning*, making *Room* for the *rising Sun* to break day in the *Soul* when he appears. We do not find that *God* is in the least displeased at the *Separation*. *The more of the Creature* drops from us, the more entirely doth *He* possess us: Nor do we ever

ever enjoy God fully, 'till our Affections be perfectly divorc'd from every thing, to be all centred in himself. *Lot's* Absence hath procur'd God's Presence. *Blessed is that Want that brings us to the Gain of a God, how great soever it be.* May I for ever be confin'd to the solitary Cell of an *Anchorite*, were I sure to be happy in the fruition of the same Blessing. The *Draughts* of Pleasure we swallow from the best Company, are imbittered from the consideration that a little Time will discontinue it to us, and leave us only the remembrance of a good that is past, and the bare hopes of a possibility to renew it, of which we are yet uncertain too, since the quarrels of *Attendants* may occasion an estrangement, and a thousand Accidents a perpetual separation: 'Tis Heaven only can bless us with an everlasting Communion: God is *Almighty* to compleat up an Happiness to us in Himself, which all the World cannot give us.

Now will God discover to his *Abraham* the vast difference of his own happy Condition from *Lot's*. *Lot* had lift up his eyes to behold the Plains of *Jordan*, but not as his Own! *How many are in the Church of God, that shall never enjoy the Churches God!* 'Tis *Propriety* makes the Prospect pleasant. Therefore shall *Abraham* lift up his Eyes too, and look Eastward, Westward, Northward, Southward, on all round about him, and behold all as his own. *Lord, how Extensive is thy Bounty to thy Servants!* By the *Perspective* of his Faith must he view it, at the distance of a few hundred years, all planted with his own Children, who in Number should compare to the little *Dusts* of

of the *Earth*. God again and again *preaching* to *Abraham* on the same *Text*, with those *Enlarge-*ments which greatly comfort his Heart, and giving new Eyes to discern that sweetness in his precious Promises which he never before had observed. Is not this our own Case? God hath made us a Promise of Heaven, and repeats it over and over; the squeamish World grows weary of it, as a *Stale* word, and hunt after *New Discoveries*. But the true Seed find such variety of Pleasures in the good *Old Truth*, that with their *Father* they feast upon it, and care not how often it sounds in their Ears; since they taste how sweetly it refreshes their Souls.

See the Care and Kindness of God, who before he departs from his *Abraham* (like a good Physician) leaves Orders with him to divert himself from his *Melancholy*, by the pleasure of another Progress thro' the whole Land of *Canaan*, which he doubted not might yield him those pleasing *Prospects* that would greatly affect and delight him: Whose directions *Abraham* so obsequiously follows; that he presently gives orders of Removal from *Bethel* where he now was. And after a very delectable *procession*, at last it pleases him to make choice of the fruitful Plains of *Mamre* in the Vicinity of *Hebron*, where we shall leave him devoutly employed in the *holy Exercises* of Prayer and *Invocation* of God, and taking many a sweet Turn in the Grove of Oaks which here grew up together to give him the Complacencies of their refreshing Shade, while we discourse to you for a while of the less happy Affairs of *Lor*.

This

This unhappy happy *Man*, having taken his leave of his *Uncle*, travels *Eastward* from him, and fixeth his *Tent* towards *Sodom*. *The very first step we make from the true Church, is dangerous, but the further Egressions are fatal.* He contents himself for a while with the innocent Delights of a separate State, where on those pleasant *Plains* he had Leisure enough to reflect on the past Felicities of his Life, under the Government of so wise and great a *Relation*, and might well have been satisfied in the paring away those superfluities of his Substance, which (as needless *Excrescencies*) had grown up to be injurious *Nuisances* to the weal of his Happiness, and had now endangered the very Vitals of his *Comfort* and *Joy*: And doubtless with bitter Tears did he repent of his Folly, when he found himself afterwards plundered of his *Estate* and *Liberty* together, by that unfortunate separation. So insensible are we of the advantages of our present security, that reaching out to grasp after greater, in a moment are deprived of all. By several *Motions* he approaches the *Town*, and at last adventures within the *Precincts*, where his *Fancy* tickled with the variety of *Conveniencies* for Life it abounded in, he resolved at length to pluck up the stakes of his moveable *Tent*, and to sleep under a more fixed *Roof* in the *City*. Thus do we pass by various *Gradations* to the last Extremity of *Sin*; (No Man accumulating to the shameful degree of being *Master of that Art* from the first day of his *Matriculation*) so neither *per saltum* fall we down at once into the deepest *sloughs* of its sorrows, but *dabbling* at the first in the little puddles,

puddles, and with Children adventuring into the shallows, (and enduring them well enough,) e're we are aware are caught away into the deep, where our Feet sticking fast in the Mire, we become like Lot's Wife, unmoveable Monuments of Wrath.

The five Cities seem to be an *Exception* from this general *Rule* ; for the first account of their *Character* is so black and sulphureous, as very early Prophecies, how probable it might be, that God would match a *Judgment* of the same complexion with their *sin* ; which as it appeared to baffle the Order of Nature, that ripens every thing by *Time*, they like *Mushrooms* grow up to perfection of *Wickedness* in a Night, and start up *Graduates* of the highest form of Villany. The Men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly : They needed no *Tutors* to instill the *Mysteries* of Iniquity by short *Lectures*, according to their weak Capacity, but themselves read them to all the World, and are become the *Gulph* that streamed out its deadly Issues to others : 'Tis no wonder then (standing in so ill circumstances with Heaven) that we find them under a state of Bondage and Slavery, the proper infliction on Rebels : God had given them up into the hands of Chedorlamer King of Elam, who as he bore an hard Name, so surely had no very soft or easie Nature, but had clap'd an *Iron Collar* on their Necks, which while they endeavour to tear off, shall gaul them the more, and eat the deeper into their Flesh. Twelve Years had they patiently endured the Yoke of an heavy Imposition and

Tribute; and while they see no end of it, they believe there will be none, unless themselves cut it off with the Sword of *Rebellion*: *His Oppression makes them mad*, and drives them to Despair, which threw them into speedy Resolutions of hazarding their Lives for their Liberty. *Whom Divine Justice decrees to bring to ruine, those it hardens to cast themselves into the very mouth of those Cannons that shall batter them to pieces.* God needs not to call in the Sword of an Enemy to dispatch his Rebels, but can invert the Edge of their Own upon themselves, making them to fall by their own Councils, and giving them over to that sottish *Gallantry* which shall entitle them to the Honour of *Chivalry* in the Battel of *Self-execution*.

The News of the Revolt of these Cities, flye with nimble Wings to the ears of the Conquerour, whom they will not find so ready to bury the Honour and Accrements of his former Victories in a *Cowardly Grave*. He resolves to carve his revenge in bloody *Characters* upon their *Flesh*. Dispatches are sent to the Princes *his Confederates*, to get ready their Arms, who with all Expedition incorporate themselves with his own, and all together, compleat up a formidable Army, which by hasty Marches soon make their Appearance on the Plains of *Jordan*. This was no more than what the *Revolting Kings* might prudently foresee and expect, and were accordingly obliged to prevent the mischief. They muster up their *Troops* therefore, and prepare to make an obstinate defence, drawing up in a *full Body* within sight of the Enemy, and Politickly

Politickly taking Advantage of the Ground, they make an Halt with design to draw them to the *Pit-falls*, whereinto they think to *Trepanne* them. The *Vale of Siddim* was full of *Slime-Pits*, the Inhabitants thereabouts, for their benefit and and supply in building, had furnish'd themselves thence, with a sort of strong and clammy Clay, that (well temper'd) made excellent Mortar and *Cement*: they had dug deep in many places, and left the Mouths of the Pits open; the Enemy being altogether ignorant of these, and themselves intending to keep them so, by standing before them, when anon feigning a retreat, and the Enemy pursuing, must (they think) inevitably in their unadvised eagerness, and heat, plunge themselves into these *Graves*: This was the Politick Stratagem of the *Sodomites*; but whether they may not prove their own a few hours will easily determine. Both Armies stand in *Battalia*, ready to make the Onset. The Numbers not very unequal, with *five Kings* against *four* to head them. Now let us see what proof ye will make of your Prowess, ye *Magnanimous* Sons of *Sodom*! Let us find with what Bravery ye will stand against the Shock, and fight for the Liberties of your Countrey, against the proud *Invaders*! But what is this we hear? Do you begin to *faint* already? Throw down your Arms at the first Charge, without scarce ever striking a blow? Are ye betaking your selves to your heels, without bearing the least Brunt? Is this the measure of your *Valour*, who at home had none of your *Lust*? O *Sin, Sin*, that meltest away the Courage of every guilty Breast into

Cowardly Terror and Trembling! Alas, these *Effeminate Fellows* had Harnessed themselves with Aking Hearts for the Field, and enter here reeking hot with the Steams of their Luxury: They were so accustom'd to *Fall upon men*, that one might have expected Prodigious Exploits from them; but in Truth, these *Gentlemen* had rather buckle with their Enemies in a *Corner*, than here in the open *Camp*, and would sooner have courted than fought them. They would *kiss* and be *Friends* with all their hearts, if that would have serv'd the turn: *Bleeding* was not a work they much cared for, they had been train'd up in other Exercises; and had rather have met with whole *Battalions* of *Oxen* and *Sheep* well Disciplin'd, marching up to their *Tables*, than the least *File* of these furious Adversaries: Myriads of *Ladies* would not have daunted them, but they had little Stomack to these, who were bent to quarrel and *Fight* in good *Earnest*. In short, To secure Life they think it better to trust to their *Feet* than their *Hands*, and all in Amazement they betake themselves to their *Heels*; but here the *Iniquity* of those heels encompassed them about, and into the *Pit* that they dug for others, *are themselves fallen*: Behold we the poor frighted wretches stumbling into the *Slime-Pits*, nor shall they recover themselves out till the Executioners come to dispatch them into deeper Pits than these: Here are they tumbling together, and want only the hands that must give them a further push into *Hell*.

Alas! how can the Feet stand which Sin and Judgment trips up? It is God that sets our feet

on the Rock, and enlarges our steps under us that we fall not. The most solid Ground is but slippery footing, where Vengeance makes the pursuit; how fitly were those *Quagmires* made to ensnare them, who at home were over head and ears so fast stuck in the *Boggs* of Unnatural *Ordures*? This is the first *Knell* of *Sodoms* Bell, which in a short Time we shall hear ringing out in a doleful Note from Heaven. The Tidings of the Defeat comes posting to the Towns, and by the few scattered *Relicks* of the Army which escaped, they might find themselves *undone*, and must prepare for the dreadful effects of the Ruine. There was left little Pillage in the Field, and the Enemy is resolved not to return home empty, they fly upon them with open mouth, and *bellow* out nothing but utter Devastation.

How shamefully do we wrap our selves up in the silken Folds of *Security* and *Ease*, lull'd along by cheating Dreams of a lasting Pleasure and quiet! when alas, poor *Lot* who had but newly *Immured* himself within his pleasing *Burrough*, is already *Ferried* out of it, and all his Provisions plundered away. Surely very vainly doth Man put Confidence in other Fixation than Heaven, where there is no *Sin* to lye hacking at the Root, nor Enemy to fix a Rope to the Body of our Peace to destroy it.

The insulting *Conquerours* Pile up the Spoils of the Cities in their *Carriages*, and enforce the late *Owners* to help drive them. The *Persons* and *Goods* pass away into a joynt *Captivity* together. Amongst others, unhappy *Lot* bears now

the just Punishment of his Folly, and is at last convinc'd of the difference of *Abrahams* Condition, from his own. He hath enjoy'd very few quiet hours since his first arrival in *Sodom*. His *Righteous Soul was vexed from day to day, with their unlawful Deeds*: Yet is he the unpitied Author of his own disquiet; since while he is fretted there, he could never perswade himself to depart thence; and now justly suffers for being found in the Devils *Quarters*. *Those that consult their Interest above their Religion, shall one day put their Gains in their Eyes*. His Cattle fed in the Plains with greater Peace than himself could do in the City, but now he breaks up House perforce, and is made to go whither others drive him. 'Twas well however for his Neighbours that they had a *Lot* with them, whose *Company* perchance they little cared for at Home; Yet do the *Wicked owe their Lives and Liberties to the Righteous, whom they Hate and Persecute*.

Unprofitable Fellowship Rases the skin, but Wicked Company, cuts the very Throat of our Comfort and Peace: The former cause our *Light* to burn dimly, but this extinguisheth it quite. *Grace* is a little spark that ever needs blowing up, what should we do among those whose infectious breath would puff it out? 'Twas but a few *Minutes* *Converse* with *Satan* that Betrayed our first *Parents* (in their full strength) to those fatal *Compliances*, that ruined themselves and us all: How improbable is it then, thy *Weakness* should find *Spirit* enough to oppose the *Encounters* of his cursed *Instruments*, (who with *Joseph's* Mistress, have *Brow* enough to press upon thee from

from day to day, to yield up the *Fort* of thine *Inno-*
cence, into the deflouring Arms of that Guilt which
 will gripe thy Conscience in perpetual Tortures.

Sampson Ran away with *whole Gates*, and slew
Heaps upon Heaps while God was with him, but
 when the tiresome Importunities of his *Dalilah*
 had melted him into a tame discovery of his great
 strength, he is sent from her Lap into a disgraceful
 Captivity, where a weaker *Door* suffices to secure
 him.

And had not *Lots* Soul been throughly *Anneal'd*
 with an holy Tincture from above, and enriched
 with a *Treasure* lockt up under the Protection of a
 Divine Hand; the *Attagues* of Temptation in that
 Impious City had certainly strip'd him as naked of
 his *Goodness*, as now he was of his *Goods*. 'Twas pre-
 venting *Mercy* alone that kept the fair *Face* of his
Piety unsullied in that *Brothel* of Impurity and Pol-
 lution: So Gracious is God (in the loss of Exter-
 nals) to Guard the unperishable *Substance* from the
 Violence and Rapine of *Men* or *Devils*. But take
 heed, Reader, that thy Principles be so well incor-
 porated into thine Affections (e're ever thou Ad-
 venture into the Society of the Factors of Hell) *that*
 neither the *Charges* they make upon *Religion*
 it self, (or the Professors of it) leave thee cold in
 thy Love or Zeal towards it, or unhinge the sted-
 fastness of thine own *Heart* to it. Never forget that
 the *Seed* sown on the *High-way* became an easie Prey
 to the fowls of the *Air*. *Heaven* is too precious an *In-*
heritance to be either *Laughed* or *frighted* out of it;
 and methinks 'tis a little unreasonable, when all the
 Prayers and Tears of the Godly, cannot prevail
 upon *Wicked* Men to leave their Sins, that the *Mocks*

or

or *Menaces* of the *Wicked* should have the least efficacy upon *Good Men* to lay aside their *Hopes*; yet how naturally are we transform'd into the Image of those we *Converse* with, as the *Complexion* answers to the *Clymate* we live in! 'Twas on the Mount that *Moses's* Face attracted a *Lustre* with *three dayes* *Communion* with God: And thine own might shine much brighter too, if instead of a *fellowship* with these *unfruitful Works of Dark-ness*, thou would'st apply thy self (by frequent *Recesses*) to inspect that *Glass* that would dart a *Cœlestial Light* into thee; and the more thou gazest with *Extasie* and *Admiration* upon it, it would not fail to change thee into the very Image of God, and pass thee insensibly from *Glory* to *Glory*.

With *heavy Hearts* and *empty Purses* the poor *Captives* of the *Cities* are carryed away, *pinion'd* together to prevent an *Escape*; while their *merciless Drivers* goad them on, and ever and anon load them with *stripes* and *taunts*, where I must leave them pitifully lamenting their present Condition, to give you some account what *Providence* is working for their *Rescue*.

(The Report of this *Disaster* is quickly conveyed to the great *Abraham*, who (in the midst of the *Calamities* of the *War* in the *Countrey*) enjoyed a *sweet* and *calmy Peace* at *Mamre*; he is little concerned with the quarrels of the *Infidels*, when he knew that it was his God that dash'd them together, while himself subsisted safe and sound. Yet, (though he little pityed them) he receives the *News* of his *Nephew's Captivity*, with a *sympathy* that ever dwells on the *Hearts* of the truly *Kind* and *Good*. But there is a time when

condolency and compassion little serve to redress the Sufferings of our *Friends*; it was not the shaking of his *Head*, or the rolling of his *Bowels*, nor his idle *Wishes* could redeem poor *Lot* from Slavery and Ruine. Grief is a *Duty*, but more proper and natural to *Women*, who can only bleed at their *Eyes*, and commiserate the Unhappyness in unprofitable Tears. *Courage* is the masculine *Virtue*: Who ever saw *Brave Man* using his *Handkerchief* instead of his *Sword*? But *Abraham* was prudent and cautious, and will not undertake a *Warr* without good Advice, he will have *sure* grounds to justify the *Attempt*, and warrant the *Success*: He first therefore Consults the *Oracle* of his *Conscience*, which was ever guided by his *Prophetical Spirit*, and on *Enquiry* finds that in this Case he may warrantably proceed. Had not *God* given him a *Title* to the *Kingdom*, who had the only *Right* to dispose of it? What though his *Subjects* did not acknowledge him, he was nevertheless the *Right Lord*? and what were these *Kings* but *Intruders* upon him, and had no other *Title* than what the *Sword* had given them? *Abraham* therefore though but a *Titular Prince*, thought himself oblig'd in *Duty* to relieve them: He takes up the *Sword* with the same *Authority* as *Moses* did afterwards, when he slew the *Egyptian* by the *Virtue* of the *Divine Revelation* made to him of his being the future *Deliverer* of the poor enslaved *People*. And to this the *Laws* of *Nature* added a *Tye* upon him to release his oppressed *Kinsman*, whom they unrighteously had injured, and who was in no wise guilty of the *Crime* more justly imputable

ble to the rest. But above all, the sacred Obligations of *Religion* could in no wise suffer him to see the little Church in *Lot's* Family led Captive, and subjected to the Rage and Tyranny of *Pagans*. *Abraham* therefore sufficiently convinc'd of the lawfulness of the War, resolves to proceed: And here we must present you with the Picture of the Saint in his *Armour*.

CH A P. IV.

Abraham fights with the four Kings for the rescue of Lot. He gets the Victory, and redeems the Prisoners. Melchisedeck at his return meets him on the way, and presents him with Provisions for his Soldiers. His Transaction with the King of Sodom.

Religion is so far from emasculating the spirits of its truest *Votaries*, that it steels them all throughout with the hardest *Courage*: It banishes those fears and seeds of Cowardise that in every danger stare others in the face, like *Cesar's Ghost* appaling the Soul of *Brutus*: It Refines them from those vitious *Qualities* that have debased many a stout Heart to truckle under the basest *Usurpations*. Who would not have mourned to see the brave *Sampson* grinding in the Mill, and made the subject of the *Philistines* scorn and laughter: It redeems them from those *salacious Lusts* that enervate the *Arteries* of the Soul,

Soul, and *take away the Heart*, subjecting it to the mean *Cringes* of dependance on every inferior Badge. It links them fast in an indissoluble Union with the *Omnipotent Power*, which ever secures protection and safety. *Hypocrisie* may brandish a Sword in the Air, and brag of its Valour against an *Eutopian* Enemy, but the single Scout of a real One makes it drop it, and sets it on flying. *Profaneness* may shut its Eyes, and harden it self against dreads of Death; it may venture a Soul to get a Name, but with no other Bravery than the gallant Horse who mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; the quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield, yet is he not afraid: So This may desperately run on the Pikes of Wrath, as insensible of danger, till rushing into the Battle it meets its Death and despairs together.

No, 'tis the brave *Abraham's* Courage shall work Wonders, who with a spirit wash'd from degenerating Lusts and Guilt (the fainty Diseases and very *Agues* of the Mind, that sets it on shaking with terrible Apprehensions of shadows) armed with *Immocence* and a good Cause, daring to look his God in the Face with the same confidence and fearlessness as he doth his own Heart: Who wears a Life to no other end but his service, and is content to lay it down at any time for his glory: Who hath a Ticket of Assurance from a second Death in his Bosom. This is the Righteous Hero that is bold as a Lyon; and you shall hear presently what an handful of such as these can gloriously perform against a puissant Army, whom Success and Victory had blown up into Pride and Presumption.

The

The *Discipline of War*, with the various *Arts* and *Politics* of it, and all the Exercises and feats of *Militia*, are a Lesson which *David* (who was a great Souldier) professes himself to have learned from *God*, who is *Generalissimo* of all the *Hosts* both of *Heaven* and *Earth*, and who is pleas'd to own the Title of a *Man of War*. By no other Tutor was this great Prince instructed before him : It was He that taught his hands to war, and his fingers to fight. He had first train'd him up in the mysterious faculties of *Believing* and *Obeying* : Now will he Exercise him in the *Martial Art* of fighting, that his *Abraham* might be as equally famous for his *Valour* as his *Faith*. And doubtless the inserting so full an Account of this War, and the *Catalogue* of the Princes that manag'd it, so accurately in the Holy Records, is due to the Care and great Kindness of *God* to his *Abraham*, who will not have him lose the honour of his *Chivalry* and Prowess, which shines so brightly in the *Defeat* of such mighty Enemies as they. All the World shall know that they were no mean and contemptible *Antagonists* that his great *Federate* had encountred with : And tho' all the *Troops* of the five Princes of *Palestine* were nothing in their hands, yet they must not imagine so lightly to carry away the *Garland*, when once the great *Abraham* took up the *Gauntlet* in the Quarrel : 'Twas Himself that raised up this *Righteous Man* from the *East*, called him to his *Foot*, gave the Nations before him, and made him rule over Kings, he gave them as dust to his *Sword*, and as driven stubble to his *Bow*.

All Knowledge is given for Communication: *God* had

had not dress up this Great Man into all the perfections of Nature and Grace, that he should find a *Grave* for them in his own Bosom. No! as he disdains not to be his own Chaplain, and thinks it no derogation from his *Grandeur*, to educate his *Servants* in the true Knowledge and Worship of God, in order to make them good *Men*, so was it his Care and Practice (no doubt from Divine Instinct) to train them up in the right Exercise and Use of *Arms*, in order to make them good *Souldiers*. (†) The one would help on the other: Religion it self, in a great part of it, being nothing else but a wise and expert Use of our *Spiritual Armour* against all the *Enemies* of our Peace, under the Guidance and Conduct of the great *Captain of our Salvation*. They might learn by every *Posture of their Bodies* to remember with what care they must stand on the *Guard* for their *Souls*. This *Trained Band* was ever ready at the Call of their *General*; they never disputed his Orders, but gave themselves up entirely to his Service and Command. They were *Catechis'd* in his Family, to an awful sence of their Duty and Allegiance to him, which was ever performed with that happy *Ingredience* of Love and *Cordial Affection* towards him, as made it disputable, Whether the *Servants* were the happier in such a *Master*, or the *Master* in such *Servants*.

Nor was his *Interest* confined within the Limits of his own Family and Household, (tho' Nu-

(†) Quas. instruxerat Arte Bellicâ, & Lege Divinâ. Menochius.

merous) but by the *Magnetick Charms* of his Virtue and sweet Disposition, he had further Attracted the Affections of the Contiguous Princes, and firmly joyned their *Powers* into the Body of his own, by the strong Obligation of a solemn *Confederacy* and *Alliance*. *Leagues among Printes have been ever held sacred and inviolable as their Persons*: And tho sometimes upon weighty Reasons of *State* they chance to be dissolv'd and broken, yet have they ever been found to be so necessary *Props* for the support of the Honour and Security of *Government*, that even the mightiest *Empires* of the Earth have been established by them. It being the peculiar Priviledge of the *King of Kings* to build his *Universal Dominion* upon absolute and independant *Foundations*, without sending forth from *Himself* to call in the *Aids* of others. See here to what degree of Majesty God had already promoted his *Abraham*; that the great *Lords* of *Canaan* thought themselves bless'd and secure in his *Friendship*; and hereafter we shall find *Kings* themselves Court-ing him for the same *Honour*.

Aner, *Eshcol* and *Mamre* (his endeared Friends and Confederates) and whom some think he had happily Converted to the true *Religion* and Service of his God, hearing the ill Tydings of the sacking of the *Cities*, and of *Abraham's* Nephew being led away *Prisoner*, think it their Duty to make tender of their Service, having heard of his Resolutions to attempt a Redemption: They get ready therefore their *Auxiliary Forces*, and (proud of the Employment) present themselves and these, to his absolute Order and Govern-
ment.

ment: Yet will not his *Posterity* allow them the least share in the *Honour* of the Victory, but tell us, that he appointed them only to guard the *Ammunition*, while himself with his *Domesticks* only gave the *Charge*.

Abraham intends to make no tedious Work of it, and therefore he lightly Arms his *Three Hundred*, (and with them *three Thousand* more whom his Faith summons from *Heaven* to fight invisibly for him) and leads them into the Field. Even the meekest *Moses* can be *Angry*, and the gentle *Abraham* whose Nature was made up all of candour and sweetness, now hath his Neck cloath'd with Thunder, and his Eyes sparkling out flames of Revenge. Love and Mercy are the natural Properties of God himself, in the acting of these is all his delight, but Justice and Execution are his strange Work, and he never doth it, but when the Abuse and Contempt of his Goodness and Mercy provokes him out of himself into Indignation and Wrath.

Stratagems of War are so far from being unlawful, that God himself hath often directed and taught them. *Abraham* knew that though the Rules of *Martial Discipline* are very severe, and the Cords that bind it straitned to a great degree of Stiffness, yet on occasion they are frequently slackned, and never yet were poor Soldiers (after hard Service, and Victory gotten) denyed the Liberty of Drinking their General's Health in a chirping Bole. The Joy of success had blown up their Spirits to that height, that they were already half Drunk with the excessive Conceit of their Conquest, and more than

than peradventure he might find them taking such Draughts as would leave them little capable of using their *Arms* towards Midnight.

On these hopes he projects to charge them *in the Dark*, and to render his little Army the more formidable, he divides his *Men* into *Parties*, who have Orders to make the Assault all at once in several sides of the Enemies Camp, striking them into great Consternation by the conjectur'd probability of a greater Force than indeed there was. The *Confederates* he leaves at a distance, to come in if need be, as a fresh supply.

If *Humane Brains* thus wittily work in the pitching those *Trayls* of Ruine, in which the Feet of their Enemies fail not to stumble and dye, let a *God* alone in the Weaving those *Nets* of *Destruction*, in which the Adversaries of himself and his Church shall be inevitably entangled with that certainty, that all the counter-workings of their own shallow Policies shall never serve them to make an escape. Never dispute what *Hell* is, or in what manner its Flames can feed on spiritual Bodies, since if there were no *gnawing Worm*, nor *devouring Fire* there, he can command New Armies of *Torments* to start up, which (as fresh supplies) shall be successively poured on the *Vessels* of *Wrath*, who in the short Day of their Life in the World, neglected the *Invitations* of his Grace.

David observes that God often blows upon the *Councils* of the *Wicked*, and bringeth their *Devices* to none Effect: But *Abraham* was too dear to be left to himself, or frustrated in any of his Honourable Designs: Yea, himself had dictated them

into

into his Head, and now cannot fail him in their putting in due *Execution*. Marching on therefore, and hearing where the *Enemy* lay, he so orders his *Motion*, as not to be discovered, till he might Shroud himself in the Mantle of the *Night*, which he knew well would add a Terror to the fury of his *Charge*. And thus when they little dreamt of an *Enemy* pursuing them, they are unexpectedly Alarm'd by his Army that encompassed them. The Disordered *Kings* who had no *Eyes* to see their Enemies, and as little Hearts to oppose them, are surprized into perfect Confusion. While *Abraham's* Sword is dipt in Gore, and his Souldiers glutted with the Blood of their Enemies, Happy was He that could Fight out his way, and So they could escape with their *Lives*, they value not the *Booty*, but contentedly leave the plunder of the Field to the *Affailants*, who were satisfied too with the Execution they had done, and had no further Orders to pursue after those few that were fled.

The poor *Sodomites* are in Astonishment to find themselves rescued by friends *unknown*, and are yet uncertain what Usage they may expect from them; Or whether they had only *Exchanged* their *Keepers*. Till anon the kind *General* gives Orders for the finding out *Lot*, who after search is brought with Joy enough into the welcome presence of his *Unkle*. And sure after all these blusters in the *World*, where we have been kept so long under fears and bondage, the coming of a Redeemer will be Joyful to us, when he shall appear in *Glory* to knock off all our *Shackles*, and present us with the Happiness of an *Eternal Liberty*.

E're we pass further, take a measure of the

Stature of *Abraham's* Faith, and how well he is flush'd into *Spiritual Confidence* and *Greatness of Mind*, who not many years since was discountenanced at the Power of one *King*, quiet and Jolly in all the Pleasures of his *Court*, can now buckle valiantly with *Three* or *Four* together, Attended by their *Armies*, and puffed up with *Victories* in the Field. *Graces* ebbe and flow in the Channel of the best *Mens Hearts*. Those *Ecclesiastical Princes* who at their *Lords* Apprehension, betook themselves to their Heels, and left him all alone, within a few Weeks had a new *Soul*, and dar'd to Impeach his Murtherers with the Guilt of his Blood to their Teeth. *Who when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they Marvelled.*

When all the *Pomps* of *Glory*, that have grac'd the Victorious *Cesar's* Triumphs, are flown away with the *Eccho* of the loud *Acclamations* where-with the Streets of that proud *City* were wont to Ring his Praise; when all the *Flowers* made choice of by *Pagan Wits*, to Bedeck and Adorn the *Crown* of his *Honour*, are all *Withered* and *Gone*; When the very *Chariots* of his *State*, at whose gilded *Wheels* the *Royal Captives* were wont to be dragg'd, are long since *Rotten* and *Crumbled* into *Dust* and *Nothing*; God himself hath erected a *Triumphal Arch* to the Immortal Memory of the Great *Abraham's Victory*, made of such *Marble* that will never decay; whereon he hath Engraven with Indelible Characters the *Memoires* of this Atchievement in the *Eternal Chronicles*, which give us the Account, and Him the *Glory* of the *Crowned Heads* that came bowing to him on the way as he returned *From the Slaughter of the Kings*,

to Congratulate with him in the Joy, and to pay him the Honours of his Victory. 'Tis observable with what *Majesty* it is expressed; *Returning from the slaughter of the Kings*: As if *Abraham's Sword* scorned any meaner *Scabbard* than the Breast of a *King*, and 'twas below him to Fight either with *Small or Great*, but only with *Kings*. Whether he slew them all, or how many of them; Or whether the Execution fell only upon their *Troops*, while Themselves made their escape in the *Dark*, is not Recorded; but certain it is, he made a very bloody and fearful *Slaughter* upon them, and such as utterly discouraged them to make any further Attempt upon *Canaan*. They were given as *Dust* to his *Sword*, and as *driven Stubble* to his *Bow*: Whom we shall leave therefore (as he) rotting as *Dung* upon the Earth, to wait on the *Conquerour* homewards, and give you an Account of those other *Princes* that presented themselves very lowly to bend before him.

And first *Melchisedeck*, the *King of Salem*, and *Priest of the most High God*; (A wonderful Person who here only starts up and makes his Appearance, as if he had taken *Life* on purpose, and having performed this Service only, had now perfected for ever the One Noble *Act* and *End* of his *Being*; could he but once see the *Face* of the *Favorite of God*, he chearfully goes home and Dies.) This Great *Prince* and *Priest* comes, not attended only with *Mules* crouching under the weight of his Royal *Presents*, made up of all sorts of *Provisions* (concisely described by (*) *Bread*

(*) *Hic Melchisedec milites Abrahami hospitaliter habuit, nihil eis ad victum deesse passus, Joseph. Antiq. lib. i. cap. 11.*

and Wine) which shall serve to refresh his weary *Servants*; (the same Civility that afterwards the brave *Gileadite* (*Barzillai*) paid to the Army of *David*, in venerable Respect to their Master.) All this did *Melchisedeck* as a King, but also is Himself Laden with a whole Cargo of *Benedictions*, which he prodigally pours out, as a Priest, from his Sacred Breast upon the Head of the Great *Abraham*, dropping upon him as a *Silver Shower*, and causing his tired *Spirits* to revive and flourish again; As the tender *Grass* springing up out of the Earth, by clear shining after Rain.

Should I stop here to *Wade* into the *Waters* of *Strife*, and make a more particular Enquiry who this *Melchisedeck* was, when the Sacred *Wit* hath given no other account than that He *Was*; and the best *Authors*, both *Jewish* and *Christian*, give little satisfaction to their *Readers*; it might be long enough ere I return to the *Patriarch*, whom I desire more closely to follow. Some contending to have him to be *Sem* the blessed Son of *Noah*, which others as hotly deny. Others alledge him to be *Jesus Christ*, and his Sect the (*) *Melchisedekians* to be one *Greater* than he, because *Christ* is compared to *Melchisedeck* in Scripture, not seeing that *Melchisedeck* rather is compared to Him. (†) *Origen* will have him to be an *Angel*, because he is said to be without *Father* or *Mother*, but that only, because not expressed in

(*) *Melchisedeciani* asserunt esse non solum *Virtutem* quandam sed esse *Christo* majorem. Aug. *Heret.* 34.

(†) *Origines* multiplici sermone disputans, illuc tandem divinatus est, ut eum *Angelum* diceret *Hier. Epist. ad Evag.*

Scripture. The most Credible follow the Letter of the Text, and go no further than *Salem* to find him out, the Ruines of whose *Palace* there appearing long after; yet they differ again about *Salem*, and some will have it that *Salem* which was afterwards *Jerusalem*; but *Jerome* denies it, and that it was another *Salem* near to *Scythiopolis*, which is to this day called *Salem*, where the Palace of *Melchisedeck* is to be seen, saith he. So likewise they differ as to the Manner and Ceremony of the presenting these Gifts; some say they were first Offered to God as *Peace-Offerings*, and then afterwards distributed amongst the *Souldiers*. Others say, they were never Offered to God in Sacrifice, but to *Abraham* only for a Present, affirming the addition of the word *Ἀυτό* to be inserted in some Copies, which clears the matter. *Melchisedeck* brought forth *Bread* and *Wine* to Him (*i. e.* to *Abraham*). And we know that *Priests* make Frequent *Visits* without Executing any Sacred Part of their *Functions*; 'twas work enough that he blessed *Abraham*; *Blessed be thou of the most High God*. And tho' a part of his Present had been offered up to God, and the rest divided between the *Men*; what is this to the Roman *Maß*? If they will gather a *Foundation* for it hence, yet at least let them be so Kind as *Melchisedeck* was, who had he brought into this Army an Acceptable present of *Wine*, (and 'Tis *Wine that cheers the Heart of Man*) and in the sight of all the *Souldiers*, should have Drunk it up All Himself; he might have Eaten up his *Bread* too, so little would they have Valued his Kindness, unless he could have made them believe

that the *Wine* was in the *Bread*, by an unperceivable argument of *Concomitancy*. Yet no other than this is the Kindness of the *Romish Priest*, who drinking up every drop of the *Wine* Himself, leaves the poor *Souldiers* of *Christ* to faint. If they will needs draw their Sacrifice from *Melchisedeck*, pray let them be as *Kind* and *Just* to the *Command* and *Institution* of their Lord and Master, as He.

Abraham receives the *Royal Priest* with a devout *Veneration* due to the Person of Him who bore so great a *Character*; 'Twas a *Representative* of his *God* whom he therefore thinks himself obliged to Honour. He embraces Him as Such, and mixes a *Carriage* full of *Reverence* and *Sweetness* towards him. His late *Prosperity* had not in the last swelled him into *Neglect* or *Forgetfulness* of his *Duty*: *Minds that are truly Great, cannot act beneath themselves*. He is surprized to find in that *Idolatrous Kingdom* so great a *Person*, that owns the *God* He Professes to *Worship*, and questionless promised to himself *Happiness* in the after *Enjoyment* of so *Divine Acquaintance* (tho' we find not any further converse they maintained). *Abraham* cannot receive so many rich *Effusions* of his *Piety* and *Bounty* without finding a thankful *Remuneration*. *Grateful Hearts are in Pain till they ease themselves from the burden of those Obligations that others Courtesy have heaped upon them*. And now is he glad that the baffled *Kings* have left him in some *Capacity* to make an *Acknowledgment* of his *Gratitude* both to *God* and his *Priest* upon the *Spot*; And therefore he very humbly *Devotes* a *Tenth Part* of all
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the Spoils he had taken. If *Christians* were all the true Heirs of *Abraham's* Holy and Generous Heart, there had little needed those multiplied *Laws* to constrain the People, and secure to the Priests their *Maintenance* by *Tythes*. *Melchisedeck* having performed his Duty, receives without scruple the Sacred Dues of his Office which the *Patriark* so chearfully paid him, and with all the Reciprocations of mutual Affection to each other, and solemn Praises to God, he departs away to his *Salem*.

His *Discession* makes way to another *Prince* of a very far different Temper and Spirit; *'Tis Piety makes the only Discrimination between Persons: All men have not Faith*. This is the sparkling *Diamond* that enriches the Crowns of Kings; Where that is wanting, *Honour* is but a *Jewel in a Swines Snout*. If private Men are illustrated by it (for since thou wast precious in mine Eyes, thou hast been Honourable,) what Glory might it add unto *Monarchs*! The King of Heaven shines in the Majesty of his *Holinefs*. *Abraham* knew well enough that the *Sodomitish King* wore no such Pearl in his Crown, therefore he puts on a Behaviour towards him, agreeable to the *Baseness* of his Spirit: He had dishonourably turned his back from the *Kings* that Himself had Charged and made *Havock* of. He cannot therefore think him worthy of that Reception that a Gallant Prince might have merited from him. Men are to be treated by the Rules of Discretion, according to the Nature of the Designs and Ends they have upon us. *Melchisedeck* came to bless God for that Excellent Person whom his Goodness had raised up to be an happy Instrument

strument of delivering the Country from the mischiefs of the *War*, and to bless Himself in the *Sight* and Acquaintance of him. But this *King* is so far from any the least Resentment of the good Providence and Means by which his Subjects were redeemed, that he looks down with a plodding Eye, and projects how to make *Abraham's* Victory an *Advantage* to himself. He appears here rather as a Merchant to *Truck* and *Barter*, than as a gallant Prince to throw his grateful *Soul* into the Embraces of the Brave *Conquerour*, with Ten thousand Thanks for so *vast a blessing*, as the *Overthrow* of the Enemies by his Victorious Arms. He could not be Ignorant that by the *Laws* of *War*, *Abraham* was indisputably entitled to whatsoever his *Sword* had Won in the *Field*. Himself had lost all by his Cowardise, what *Abraham* had recovered by his Courage; And yet hath he the Confidence to Challenge a share in the Benefit of his Noble *Adventure*. And mistaking the brave *Patriarch* for a Man of as Sordid a *Soul* as Himself, thinks that he *Bids* him Fair in the proffer of the Booty, provided he might have the *Persons* to himself. This is the main *Errand* that brings the King of *Sodom* (as his own Ambassador) to the Camp of *Abraham*.

How perfectly *Strangers* are the Men of this *World*, to the Princely Greatness of Mind that directs and ennobles all the Actions of the Righteous and the Holy? Now shall this King of *Sodom* see the difference of a *Star* from a *Clod*, and a *Spirit* enkindled by the true Celestial *Fire*, from his own, that glared in the contemptible Light of a *Glow-worm*.

Would

Would he have *Abraham* to go *One Mile* with him in *Courtesie*, behold he will go *Two* ! Would he have his *Coat* from him, let him take his *Cloak* also ! Does he make suit to have the *Persons* ? Let him take them, yea and the *Goods* also. the Spirit of an *Abraham* can grant more, than The *Sodomite* hath confidence to Crave. The Noble *Patriarch* opens Heaven to him, and darts out a Beam of the *Divine Nature*, that strikes him into perfect *Extasie*, there is *no more Life in him*, while he beholds the *Majesty* of the great Soul of *Abraham* : His own *Dunghil* Gods shed no such Influences on their *Votaries*. He looks on him as on some Sacred *Shrine* fallen from Heaven, and sent for him to *Worship* and be enrich'd by. So impossible is it for the true Race of the Heavenly *Progeny* to degenerate from the *Royal Nature* of their Mighty and Bountiful Father, who scatters *Scepters* and *Kingdoms*, and freely gives *Grace* and *Glory*. *Avaritious Minds* in every *Lineament* of their *Actions*, plainly betray their *Sordid Extractions* ; and let them wear the *Phylacteries* of their *profession* never so broad, yet these *Fig-leaves* dropping away, very visibly discovers the Shame of their *Nakedness*, and want of those Holy *Garments* (that God himself wears, and) which should *Dress* them up to Salvation. The long Robes of the *Pharisees* were too curtile and thin to hide from the Holy *Jesus* their *Hypocrisie* and *Covetousness* : Nor is there surely a greater *Affront* unto Heaven, than for these *Sons of the Earth* to pretend themselves Married to the *Daughters of God*. I will confidently averr that the Covetous Soul hath not the least Spark of the Sacred Fire
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in it. *An Earthly Saint is a Monster in the Church, with six Fingers and Toes on his Hands and Feet, scraping and raking in the Muck-heaps of the Creation. Let not such dare to say, We have Abraham to our Father, since of the very Stones of the streets, God is every day polishing up brighter Children unto Abraham, while themselves lie wallowing in the Dirt.* Now, the brave *Abraham* heaps the *Goods* of this World upon the Head of a *Sodomite*, whose very Heart was upon them; and scorns to afford them a *Lodging* in his Thoughts. Let him cripple his Shoulders with the burden of them; himself would keep his affections free. *Abraham* piles up *Earth upon Earth* and buries him into the Dust. Should but a little *Mote* of that *Mould* hang on his own *Foot*, he would shake it from him into his Lap, and disdains to wear but a *Buckle* in his *Shoe*, that ever came out of *Sodom*. He might have sav'd himself the trouble of this Journey; hence (long before he asked) his *Petition* was granted and made sure to him by *Oath*, though he knew it not: For no sooner had God given him the *Victory* (and with it a Right to all that was found in the Field) but presently *Abraham* turns his Arms upon *Himself*, and Fights to Conquer his own Temptations. He had not stirred a Foot from the base Motive of a private *Advantage*. The World should see that he Acted from principles particular to himself, and shall be abundantly convinced that he had no dishonorable Aims. He knew well enough whither to Go, and from whom to expect his Reward.

Thus

Thus is This Great Man sticking Pearls into the Crown of God, while he leaves his own bare. 'Tis below any Child of Abraham to warm himself by the Sparks of his own Kindling, when the Cause and Glory of Heaven catches cold. Abraham lifts up his Hand to the most high God, to hang up all his Trophies in the Celestial Court, and Knew not whither this might not be a Means to allure the King of Sodom thither after them, when he should find a Person of such rare Religion and Vertue, as could perfectly deny himself, and Abjure Profit, that great Diana of the World. Weep my Soul, that thou seest so few Heirs of Abraham's Faith and Self-denial. The whole World hunting after Shadows which themselves call Substance, and labouring under a greater Distraction than this Sodomitish King, who crav'd only the Souls, and was content to forgoe the Goods; but these abjure their own Souls, so they may finger the Goods, and are so far from letting pass their Pretence of Right to them, that they quarrel even with God Himself, and venture the loss of an Eternity for them.

How often is it found, that Generous Minds suffer under the Injurious Imputations of a too foolish Facility and Softness of Nature. They are deemed but Weak Men that do not Stare and Stamp for their Interest, and hold what they have gotten Stiffly. The King shall have but little cause to be Jealous of Abraham's Discretion and Prudential Management of his Affairs. He shall not go home and deride his too easie Temper, since notwithstanding his Noble Grant of the whole Booty to him, he doth not thereby intend Injustice

justice to others, by his own kindness to Him. *Proportions* must be first made to his Three *Amorite Confederates*, who had run the hazard of the War, and might reasonably expect to enjoy a share in the *Spoils*; he therefore gratefully assigns to each of them his *Part*, and thereby gave the *King of Sodom* to know that he was no stranger to his Own Right in the Whole, and that, *Not of His own, had he given him*. As for his Souldiers, they were all his *Domesticks*, in perfect Resignation to his Pleasure, whom he feared not to *Mutiny* for the *Plunder* of the Field, and he knew well enough How to gratifie them at home. Thus is *Abraham Just and Wise*, as well as Generous, and Tempers his Courtesie with Prudence: And the design of *Abraham* was evident, to clap a *Padlock* on this Kings *Foul mouth*. He shall not Vaunt hereafter that *Abraham* was Enriched by his Loss. And hath not God himself contrived the *Means* of our Eternal *Happiness* in so wise a manner, that when by Sin we had ruin'd our selves (with *Sodom*) he hath provided a Redemption for us, to which we have not contributed the least *Finger* of *Help* or *Assistance*; but whether we will or No, the Praise of all must redound to the Glory of his *Grace*, that no Man shall boast, and the *Months* of all be stopped for evermore.

Prophane Hearts are ever ungrateful to God and Man, under the richest Mercies. This Kindness of *Abraham* was little considered by this King his *Nephew*: (*) He returns laden with the *Profits*

(*) *Videbimus Sodomitas, accepti beneficii fuisse inmemores, dum superbe & contumeliose Sanctum se Lot vexarunt.* Calv. in Gen. 14.

of the whole Expedition, while *Abraham* goes Home as *Light* and Empty as ever he went out, and hath only the naked Glory of the famous *Exploit*. The *Author of our Salvation* bled not for himself; he was happy from *Eternity* in the *Bosom*, and was the *daily delight* of his *Father*, rejoicing always before him: When he passed forth to *Encounter* and Destroy the Enemies of our *Peace*, what Got he but many *Wounds* upon himself, while we enjoy the happy Fruits of his Love and Victory; yet alas, his Kindness is but little regarded, and too many fall in League and Strike Hands with those that Smote him. Unthankful Man!

C H A P. V.

God appears again unto Abraham labouring under some Trouble of Mind, particularly That of the Want of an Heir. God cheers him from the Assurance of an Innumerable Posterity, and the whole Land of Canaan for them. Both which are confirmed by an Irrefragable Covenant, &c.

A *Braham* having thus happily Carv'd out a Peace to the Country by his Victorious Arms, hath now time to sit down and enjoy himself and his God in *Quiet*; this was the pleasing Element he naturally delighted to Breathe in. The ratling of *Armour*, and the *Neighing* of *Horses*, and *Garments* dipt in *Blood*, are not so Affecting Objects to the Senses of Gods Children, who
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are taken up rather with the sweet *Whispers* of his *Love*, and ravishing *Songs of the Night*. There is all peace in Heaven, and universal *Harmony* of Concord, which Crowns the Felicity of the Blessed. *Abraham* thro' all this *Expedition*, had demean'd himself with so much Courage and *Gallantry*, that God, having first sent *Melchisedeck* as his *Ambassador*, to Salute and Bless him in his *Name* by the way, Now can refrain no longer from coming Himself to him, to bring him a gracious *Welcome home*.

Whether *Abrahams* busie thoughts had been working upon the consequent Issues of this *War*, and framing to himself some timorous *Imaginations* of a future danger, in case these scattered Troops should rally again (and recruiting into greater Numbers) might return all enflamed with the fury of *Revenge* upon him, as *Princes* seldom lay down the *Cudgels* for one broken Head;) or whether (as others think) that God having been so kind to him in the prospering his Arms, to the desired Honour and Ends of *Victory*, might seem to put him off with a *Temporal Reward*: (As it is not unusual for the Faithfullest Souls to be jealous of this Worlds Prosperity, they cannot endure to think of being sent away with any blessing short of *Himself*: *There is none on Earth I can desire besides thee* :) Or whether he found the *Princes* of the Country, rather envious at, than affected with, or thankful for the deliverance he had wrought them: Whether this, or any of these; but surely we may discover even from God Himself, that he Laboured under some great Perturbation of Mind. When he
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saw it fit therefore to revive his drooping *Spirits* by conveying his *Consolations* to him *in the Visions of the Night*, and to pour in such a *Gulip of Joy*; as shall quickly restore him to his wonted Temper and perfect *Serenity of Soul*. *Fear not Abraham, I am thy Shield, and thine exceeding great Reward.* See, I have already given thee an Experience of my Power and Protection, that shall ever be continued for thy future Preservation and Safety: *I have covered thine Head already in the day of Battle, and hid thee in the Hollow of mine Hand*, from the rage of thine Enemies: So will I ever be a *Wall of Fire round about thee*; they shall but scorch themselves that approach to hurt thee. *No weapon formed against thee shall prosper; yea, tho' the whole Earth should gather themselves together to injure thee.* Do not dread the united strength of the *Arm of Flesh*; thou hast a God that will ever arise up for thy Defence. He that *toucheth thee*, shall as prosperously hope to pull out the *Apple of mine Eye*, and to defeat all the *Hosts of Heaven* that shall ever be Armed as thy *Life-guard*; so soon shall thine Enemies prevail to baffle Omnipotent power and Strength, as to pull one *Hair* from thine Head, much less to sheath a *Sword* in thy Heart: Wrap up therefore thy self securely within the Folds of my Invincible Power, by an unquestionable Confidence in my Watchfulness and Care that shall ever attend thee, thro' all the most dangerous Accidents of thy Life: *Fear not Abraham, for I am thy Shield.* And whereas in this Affair of the King of Sodom, thou hast acquitted thy self with so Noble Respect to mine Honour, and so full a Dependance on

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my Power and *Alſufficiency* to enrich thee, ſo as thou haſt deſpiſed the means of a *Ditaton* by an Addition of thoſe contemptible Spoils to thine Eſtate : Know this for thine Encouragement and Joy, Thou ſhalt be ſo far from being a loſer by ſo generous a preferring my Glory beyond thine own Interests, that inſtead of them, I will give thee *my Self*; a God who have all the Treasures of *Earth* and *Sea* at mine own Power to Diſpoſe of, and if need were, could command them all to meet in thine *Exchequer* to enrich thee : And who am in my ſelf ſo inexhauiſtible a Fountain of more *Durable Riches* and *Honour*, than what are drawn from the poor *Mines* of the *Earth*, and with theſe will I Ennoble thee for ever. Be not Jealous that I intend thee no further Honours than what thou haſt Atchieved from the Glory of thy Conqueſt ; when mine Own hand ſhall weave thee an Immarceſſible *Crown* that ſhall fit faſt on thy Head, and never Wither or Die. And tho' the ungrateful *Canaanites* pay thee not the *Homage* and honourable *Acknowledgment* of their own deliverance by thine Hand, or maliciously Envy thee the Glory of it, yet ſhalt thou have little cauſe to complain : When I make over *my ſelf* to thee, who am infinitely more than all Things, and who could as eaſily make thee Lord of the *Univerſe*, as to beſtow theſe Kingdoms of *Canaan* upon thee ; but that I reſerve to thee a Portion in mine own moſt glorious *Effence*, and thou ſhalt not run to the Creatures for a Recompence, for *I (my ſelf) will be thy Reward*, and thou ſhalt every day find how Great, how exceeding great a *Reward*, thy God will be unto thee.

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But, mighty *Jehovah* ! hast thou fitted the *Shield* of thy *Protection* to the Body of thine *Abraham* only ? Is the Promise made to him alone ? And wilt thou leave all the Heirs of his Faith and Spirit, naked and bare to the Cruelties of their Enemies ? Hast thou but one *Shield* of Defence ? *Shield us, even us also, O our Father !* Yea we know well that thou art a *Sun and a Shield* to all them that walk uprightly, as *Abraham*. God hath expanded the Buckler of his Protection (as the Heavens) over all the Body of his dearest Church. *Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O People saved by the Lord ! the shield of thine Help, and the sword of thine Excellency, thine Enemies shall be found Lyars to thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.* Come ye *Angels* (one of you is enough) and smite the blasphemous Host into dead Corpses. Come ye *Starrs*, and fight in your Courses against the Tyrannous *Sisera* : Come ye mighty *Waters* and prepare *Graves*, for the Obdurate *Pharaoh* and all his Army, within the vast gulph of your own *Bowels*. Come forth ye poor *Worms*, and take your Repast on the Carcass of the *Mortal* that would fancy himself to be a *God*. Come thou little *Stone* cut out of the *Mountain*, that shall break in pieces all the Kingdoms of the Earth, that oppose thee ! Come near ye *Nations*, hear and hearken ye *People*, for the indignation of the Lord is upon you, and his fury upon all your *Armies* ; he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter : For his sword is bathed in Heaven, behold it shall come down upon *Idumea*, and upon the People of his Curse unto Judgement.

And come thou blessed Son of *Abraham*, the In-

vincible *King* of the *Church*. With the *Spiritual Sword* of thy might, enter into the *Confines of Hell*; Invade the *Territories of the Infernal Powers*; dash in pieces all the *Gates of thine Dominion*; break their *Iron Barrs* asunder, lade away the *Spoils of those cursed Principalities*, the *Trophies of their Eternal Honour, Sin and Death*. Make a shew of them openly, to all the *World*, expose them to the derision of *Angels, and Men*, as the baffled *Captives of thy Power*! Fasten them to the *Wheels of thy Chariot*; drag them after thee, when in the day of thy *Triumph* thou shalt enter into thy *Kingdom*, thence let them receive the dreadful Sentence of everlasting *Ignominy and Contempt*.

Come hither *Christian*, and view thy self Secure as *Infinite Power* and the *Strength* of a *God* can make thee: If thou wilt negligently hang up thy *Shield* to the *Walls*, and walk naked thro' all the *Quarters* of thine *Enemies*, and promise thy self safety in the midst of *Devils*, and *Men* almost as *Bad* as they, without this *Coat-Mail* of the *Divine Promise* girt about thee, or but loosely put on; what can be expected, but thy certain fall even by these baffled *Straglers of the routed Army*, who lye lurking to make their *Prey* upon thee, and to lead thee with themselves into the *Eternal Prisons*? To dye by a *Noble and Victorious hand*, would yet be somewhat *honourable*, but for these *disarmed Troops of Hell* to triumph in thy *ruine*, and fix thee in perpetual *Chains of darkness* (and this only from thy carelesness and neglect of carrying thine *Arms* about thee, and wearing the *Shield of thy Defence*.)

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this will be matter of indelible *Shame* and *Confusion*.

This is that special piece of Spiritual Armour, that shouldst thou be so vain to leave the rest behind, yet of this art thou cautioned by no means to be forgetful, but *Above all to take with thee the Shield of Faith*: And what is this but the close-buckling this Excellent Promise about thine Heart? *Come my Son, let not Mercy and Truth forsake thee, bind them about thy Neck, write them upon the Table of thy Heart*. That thou mayst ever retain this Glorious Inscription in thy Eye: *The Lord is my Shield and my Buckler, He is my defence; the Holy one of Israel is my King. Whom then should I fear? of whom should I be afraid?* The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what Man can do unto me? The Lord taketh my part with them that help me, therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me: The Captain of my Salvation hath subdued all mine Enemies under me; they are all fallen, and shall never be able to rise again: And thro' him that loveth me, am I *more than a Conquerour* over them all! He hath redeemed me from the hand of mine Enemies, that I should *serve him without fear*, &c. And this is the *Mercy that he swore to our Father Abraham, that he would grant us*. He confirmed it to thee by an Oath, and wilt thou walk loosely under it, and tamely yield thy self Prisoner to every base Assault? When thou hast listed thy self under his Colours, and entred into the Bonds of that Sacrament, that obligeth thee to stand valiantly against every Adversary of his

Glory ; who once said to the Great *Abraham*, (and in him to thee too,) *Fear not, for I am thy Shield.*

And this *Shield* is a *Sun* too, that will ripen all the fruits of his *Bounty*, by which thy *Table* is spread. Thou shalt not need Crouch to a *Sodomite* for a piece of *Bread* : How deservedly did he wear the Leprosie of a *Naaman* upon his own Skin, that could steal from the Presence of his great Master to post after an *Affyrian*, for a little Silver and a few Changes of Raiment ! 'Tis below the Princes of the Blood to court the Skullions of the Kitchen for Scraps : These, whose Spirits are feasted every day with *Hidden Manna*, need little question their daily Provisions, which flow in upon them from the less Expensive *Current* of Providence. *Jacob* may send into *Egypt* for Corn, but he shall send his own full *Bags* to pay for it : And if *David* solicits a *Nabal*, for a part of his *Sheep-sheer* Cheer, 'twas but in order to the design of God to translate his whole Estate upon him with his *Wife*. *Abraham's* Children have *Milk* and *Honey* in their own *Canaan* ; and if they had less, yet is their *Dinner of Herbs* better than the stalled *Ox of the Wicked*. The very Gleanings of *Ephraim* are better than the Vintage of *Abiezar* : And he that sups with *Herod* may chance disgorge his *Stomach* when he finds the Head of a *Prophet* brought up in a Charger for second Course ; even of that *Prophet*, who to avoid the dangers of their poysonous Dishes, contents himself with the *Locusts* of the Wilderness. The Great *Elijah* can trust his Master to Cater for him by the Ministry of *Ravens*, and when that fails, is satisfied with the poor fare of a *Widow*, rather than

then to Glut himself (with *Jezebel's Chaplains*) upon the Varieties of her providing. His brave Successour, with all his *Colledge*, are thankful to God for a Mess of *Pottage* : And the patient *Habakkuk* can joyfully feed on a God alone ; tho the *Fields* and *Herd*s and *Stalls* should afford him not a *Joynt* to supply his Table. These with their Great Lord had *Meat to eat which the World knew not*. So had the Children of the *Captivity*, who chose rather to make their Meals on *Pulse* and *Water*, than to defile themselves with the princely *Vians* of the Royal Board. The holy *David* fears to be *choaked* with them : *Let me not eat of their dainties*. With an holy disdain have all the best Children of *Abraham* declined the dangerous Accession of earthly Superfluities : Let the *Swine* of the World (who offer to no other Deity but their Bellies) swill themselves till they break again. *All their fresh springs are in God*. And though *Esau* said he had enough, and wanted not *Jacob's* Presents ; yet had he little enough who wanted *Jacob's* God. Let the true Children of *Abraham*, learn to take out the lesson of Generosity from him, and to wind up all their desires in God, who (abstracted from all Creatures) will very shortly be their only Portion, and themselves shall be for ever filled with *his fulness who filleth all in all*. Let them give no occasion to any *Sodomite* of the Earth, to suspect that they worship a God who is a Niggardly Rewarder of his Servants ; and are therefore forced to sneak to them for *mouldy bread*, and *clouted Shoes*.

But sit down for a while, and consider, (Rea-

der) what mean these Golden Words, *I am thy exceeding Great Reward* : When all the *Great Ones* of the World have the Plague of the Serpent upon them, and lick the dust of the Earth, and terminate their desires in a Cursed Portion; to thee will I give my *self* for an Heritage! And could thy shallow Apprehensions conceive what a God is in himself, or can be, and do for his faithful Servants, thou mightest then reach the Dimensions of that Blessing, which because they are so infinitely beyond all the strength of thy Faculties to comprehend, therefore have I provided an *Eternity* for thee, wherein I will enlarge those Powers of thy Soul to a sweet and ravishing Contemplation of all my Perfections, and thine own exceeding Happiness in having an Interest in them, when thou shalt more perfectly see the Happiness of that Enjoyment, and more fully know what infinite Wisdom, Power and Love can effect, when they lay out themselves in Contrivances of all possible Felicity and Blessedness, to all the Objects of my Favour and Grace : And if I design this Happiness for thee to Eternity, thou canst not fear that I should be defective to thee in this life, but even now will crown all thy faithful Services with Rewards and Encouragements due to them. *Thy works of Faith and Righteousness*, shall be present *Peace* and Comfort, and the *effects* of that *Righteousness*, *quietness* and *Assurance* for ever. And what is there, Reader, that the utmost desire of thy Ambitious Heart can reach out to to covet after, but what *Abraham's* God can as bountifully conferr upon thee, hadst thou the least degree

degree of his Faith to believe it? It is He that
can make thee *ride upon the High places of the*
Earth, and open to thee all the rich Exche-
quers of his Treasure, that thou shalt not need
Crouch to *Kings*. He can platt a *Coronet* of
Honour for thy Temples, and give thee a Name
like unto the *Name of the Great Men of the*
Earth. Who promoted the poor *Shepherd* from
waiting on those *few Sheep in the Wilderness*, to
become the glorious *Head* and *Pastour* of his
People? Who called the despicable *Fishermen*
from their *Boats* and *Nets*, to be *Spiritual Prin-*
ces in all the Earth, and set them as glittering
Suns to shine for ever in the Firmament of his
Church? He can prepare a Table for thee even
here in the Defart, that shall baffle all the
Elixirs of the Field and the *Vintage*: Can give
thee a Taste of that Manna the Spirits of *Angels*
are feasted with: Can whisper Secrets into
thine Ears, that shall drown thy heart with Joy
unspeakable and *Glorious*: Can light up such a
Taper in thy *Soul*, that shall pierce the Clouds,
and give thee a Prospect of the Invisible King-
dom, and bless thy Soul with *Moses's* Eyes:
When all the World is tossed on the Billows
of his Wrath, can lodge thee in an *Ark* of per-
fect Security and Peace. Thou shalt not *fear the*
fears of the Wicked, nor be *distracted with their*
Amazements: Thy Soul shall dwell in quiet
within the *Tabernacle* of his Presence: If Hea-
ven and Earth should fall and mix together in
one *Chaos* of Confusion, the Ruine should not
concern thee at all: Thy Foot is fixt on the
unmoveable Rock from all the Dreads and Pos-
sibilities

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ibilities of falling : *Everlasting Arms* would be underneath, to preserve thee from *dashing thy self* against the bruising Stones. When Time hath spun out the Silver Thread of thy Life on Earth, God will furnish thee with a *Clew* that shall convey thee safely thro' all the *Labyrinths* of Death, into the lightsome Palace of an everlasting Joy and Glory ; where thou shalt ever share with his Chosen in endless Felicities, and wear on thy happy Head the Immortal *Crown of Life*. God from his own most blessed Essence flowing out unto thee with inexhaustible streams of ineffable Pleasure and Love, which drown all apprehensions here to conceive, and must despair ever to know, before thou comest to enjoy them : Lo ! this is the Reward and *Heritage* of the faithful Children of that *Abraham*, whom God made the happy Object of his *own delight*, his Friends *Joy*, his Enemies *Envy*, and the *Wonder* of all the World.

Cease then from inquiring what an exceeding Great Reward thy God will be to those that serve him with *Abraham's Heart* : Nor ask with *David*, *What shall be done to the man* that shall fight the Battels of God, against the *Goliath's* of the World, and Sin ; but buckle on thine Armour, and with *Abraham* and *David* act Couragiously ; and in the Strength of thine Almighty Shield thou shalt not fail to be Victorious ; the little *Pebble* of this single Promise, shot from the strong Arm of thy Faith and Confidence, shall *sink* into the *Forehead* of all thine Opposers, on whose Ruines thou shalt build to thy self a *Pillar* and Monument of Immortal Glory and Praise.

Thou

Thou wilt pardon me, Reader, this long digression from *Abraham's Story*, while I have been labouring only to heave up thy dull heart and tired Spirits, to that blessed place where himself is entred, and to give thee (in a smaller draught) an imperfect *Copy* of those Glories, to which his Faith and Courage have so happily preferr'd him. We shall find him presently making use of his *Shield*, and trying what metal it is made of, not against a weak Combination of Kings, but against God himself. Indeed the manner of his *Attacque* is somewhat different, for there is no prevailing against God but by an humble use of his own Weapons: Therefore having received the Ammunition, he immediately makes his Assault, and so very luckily managed it, that it struck into the very Heart of God, and thence fetch'd out the blood that was afterwards temper'd to make up the Son which he fought for. *When fury and Wrath can prevail nothing, Tears and Prayers get the Victory.* Hast thou said, thou wilt be a *Great Reward* to me? to what purpose will all that be, when I am hastening to my Grave, and cannot bear with me thy Blessings into the next World, and I have no Heir to enjoy them after me? — *Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go Childless?* See how *Abraham* strikes while the Iron is hot; and dexterously clinches the Nail of the Promise, with the humble stroak of his Faith into the breast of God's Faithfulness, which opens it Self to make way for it to stick in; and there it abode for many years after, till *Isaac* came to draw it out. 'Tis observed (by the Learned)

Learned) that *Abraham* (*) *Sigh'd* out this Request to God from the very bottom of his Heart, which no wonder then had so good effect on the Heart of God. The weak Charge of the Lips do little Execution, without strong Enforcement from the Breath of the Soul. *Omnipotence* it self falls under the *Push* of a melted Soul. The Wind of Affectionate Prayer, and Showers of true Repentance, turns the very Bowels of a God within him, and puts him on Repenting too. *Mary's* Tears at *Lazarus's* Grave, sets *Jesus* on Groaning, and then to Weeping as fast as She: Admire not to see the Soul of her Brother discharged out of Heaven, when God could keep it there no longer. The Spiritual Kingdom is very well pleased, to suffer under such Violence. It may be *Jacob* afterwards learned from his *Grandfather* this Never-failing Art of Wrestling with Heaven, for in his buckling with the *Angel*, though himself got a small blow (that put his *Thigh* out of joynt,) yet had he Strength enough still to hold him *Prisoner* till he got his Designs upon him, and his *Tears* trickled down so fast, that there was no more Heart in his *Antagonist* to deny him that *Blessing* that he so powerfully struggled for. As a *Prince* he prevailed with God: But how? He wept and made Supplication unto him. They were *Jacob's* Tears that melted the strength of that Blessed Prince of Angels, who when he came into the World in our Nature, made use himself of no other Arms.

(*) *Domine Jehovah, illud patheticum est eoque, tanquam singulienus usus est Abraham,*

But what are *Sighs* and *Groans* and *Tears* (were they all of Blood) for how little are they regarded in the World? Since they make the poor Patients but the more unpleasing Company to others who breath in the *Egyptian* Air, where no such Showers fall, where no such Winds do blow? Yet *Sighs* for Sin differ from other *Breath*, as the Sweet Perfumes of the *Aromatick* Mountains from the Fuliginous Vapours of the dead Sea, or the Inspirations of Heaven from the Noisom Belchings of Brutes: They are the Brisk Gales that scatter the Fogs of Guilt, and securely waft us to Heaven. And though they are Inarticulate, and pass away from us without a *Coinage* into Noise and Words, yet God knows their Oratory well enough, and can spell them into so good Sence, that he puts his own *Imprimatur* upon them, and shall be produc'd as *Records* of true Repentance, though there be little else to plead for Mercy and Safety in the day of Visitation, but the poor Evidence of a few Hearty *Groans* under the killing Tyrannies of Sin. When the *Bottle* of Tears shall appear at that time to plead for us, then shall these *Winds* also pass out of their Treasury, to blow some Refreshment on us: Both the one and the other Washed and Sweetned with the Sacrifice of the Blood of *Jesus*, *Ezek. 9.4.*

God had already made to *Abraham* a General Promise of a Numerous *Seed*, and now he *Sighs* to have that Promise more particularly express'd. *Generals* in Religion leave the Affections Dull and Cold, and are but as the *Embers* upon the *Hearth*, which more explicite Revelation blows up into Flames of Spiritual Heat and Joy. All the rich

Legacies

Legacies of the *New Testament* do but meanly Affect us, till they are translated into the Heart by the Finger of God. Then, *O how I love thy Law!* 'Twill never be well with us till we Pray and Sigh too, with *Abraham*, for a more express Illumination and accomplishment of the Promise: *I will write my Law in their inward parts.* General Promises satisfy (well enough) a dead and General Faith, all whose Hopes are on the *Paper*, but a Lively Faith is ever Restless till they be transcribed thence, and engraven in legible Characters within. *The Law of his God is in his heart.* That is the *Fleishly Table* upon which it is fairly written. Salvation is secure to all whose *Names* are written in the *Book of Life*; but 'tis a *Lamp* from the *Sanctuary*, (the *Spirit of Revelation*) that must clear up the Evidence to the Soul of its own *Name* being there inserted. *Abraham's* true Faith Sighs after more explicate *Demonstration*. 'Tis a dreadful thing to leave the Concerns of Eternity under Fear and Doubts. Give all diligence to make your *Calling and Election* sure. *Abraham's* Soul was at stake, and longed till he were better secured of the promised Seed which should make himself and all the *Nations of the earth* happy. He Pants (*) till he see that natural Root from whence the Blessed *Branch of Righteousness* should in Gods good time be most happily derived. What could he beg less than this? In vain would all other Blessings

(*) *Quodnam donum oblectationi aut consolationi mihi erit, quamdiu non video promissionem tuam completam de semine meo ex quo Messias est procreandus?*

be heap'd on his Head. But to pass down into the *Chambers of death Childless*, and all the *Memoirs* of his Faith and Obedience to be buried with him in the same Sepulchre: This is matter of Grief to him, under all the Royal Largesses of Divine Bounty towards him. *Progeny is the natural desire of Man*, whose Ambition is to see himself survive in others springing from him; and Children are but the living Images of their deceased Parents, who (so long as They live,) are not altogether dead. Besides *Abraham* foresees his great Name might be interred in *Oblivion*, if God should not inscribe it on a more lively *Monument* than his *Steward Eliezer of Damascus* was like to make; who although he were a good Man, and by being adopted his Heir, might be raised to bear some Figure and Resemblance of his State in the World; yet (he fears) he would prove but a dark *Representative* of the Great *Abraham's* Spirit, and no *Express Image* of his Masters Person: Too dark a *Region* for his Illustrious Vertues to shine in.

The Sence of this Infelicity lay so heavy upon his troubled Spirits, that now he fights for *Life*, and reduplicates his stroaks. The Rock had not yet yielded him one comfortable *Drop*, which in an instant shall gush out in *Floods of living Water*; he renews the complaint, and piteously laments his condition. *To me hast thou given no Seed*. None yet appears, though thou tellest me of a numberless One. I find no Accomplishment of thy Promise. God sometimes makes as if he did not hear, and seems to shut his Ears, while yet his Heart is open. He loves to put a Value on his

his own Mercies, which we so much the more esteem, as they cost us dear in purchasing and waiting for. *Blessings too cheaply gotten, are too meanly priz'd.* Abraham's Soul is in Travel for an Heir, he must not hope to be delivered by one poor single *Pang*. In vain do we knock at Heavens Gates, without watching there till Answer comes; and if that be delayed, our Requests are to be enforced by new Arguments, and more pathetick workings of Heart. And though our Prayers be answered before we cry, yet must we call again and again for that Answer. And *Jesuu* taught us a Parable to this end, that we ought always to pray, and not to faint: Let Abraham hold out but one throw more, and the Child shall come to the Birth. Christian! thou hast been in long Labour for a Saviour, the next Groan may bring him from the Womb of Gods Decree, and thine own Prayers into thy joyful Arms: wilt thou dye before thou see thy Saviour Born in thy Heart? *Christ in thee, the hope of Glory.*

Behold God this very Moment appearing to cancel all the *Evidences* of the *Strangers* Pretensions, and breaking for ever the Heart of *Eliczer's* Hopes: See the Seals of those despairing Conveyances, making over thine Estate and Soul to the *Forreigner*, all lying on the Ground torn off, and himself sneaking away in utter Desperation, at the first breaking out of the true *Isaac*. Go Father Abraham, and teach all the World the profit of patient waiting at the Throne of Grace, for by thine *Importunity* and *Perseverance* hast thou prevailed with God. Since the pains of thine Heart have turned even Gods within him, and
caused

caused his very Bowels to roll, in the *Sounding* whereof thou hearest the joyful Tidings of a Son, which shall issue from those very Bowels that have stirred in so violent Motions, against which his pity hath no strength any longer to withstand thee; and hath all this while made but a feigned Resistance, while thou hast been shewing a *Trial of thy Skill*, how well thou canst manage thy *Shield*, and how prosperously God himself may be attack'd, when it shall please him to yield up himself to be conquered by his *Creature*.

Abraham hath been in *Pravel*, and Behold a Troop cometh. What a *prolifick Grace* is *Prayer*, which brings forth *Thousands* and *ten Thousands* in our Streets; and makes *Parents of an Incomprehensible Seed*. The Off-spring of that Grace, are all the Innumerable Productions of Eternity, which all the Arts of *Arithmetick* must for ever despair to sum up. Can the Great God give any thing little? Hath *Abraham* wrought all this while but for one Son? Come all ye glittering *Lamps of Heaven*, your mighty Creator sends you a *Summons* to make your Appearance here in your clearest Shine, not the *One thousand three hundred twenty five* chief Commanders, that seem to exceed the rest in Glory, but give your Orders to the Minor Lights to make up all the Force, and with all your united Numbers make some Figure to the Great *Abraham* of the infinite Issue that I will bless him in, who from one Son shall multiply into *Myriads*, to bespangle the lower Firmament of my Church. For so shall his Seed be.

God had employed him before, to the endless work of accounting the numbers of the little *Dust* of the Earth. Now will he have him to enumerate the *Stars* of Heaven with the like impossible Imposition. Some critically observe that by the former, God pointed out the natural Seed of his Body, whose names should be written in the Earth, and whose very Souls would cleave to the *Dust*. But by these he decyphered to him, the Spiritual (*) Children of his Faith, all the World over, whose names are written in Heaven, and who should shine as *Stars* for ever and ever. Great indeed is the difference of these from the other; And Holy Records witness, that *Abraham*, of the innumerable Children of his Flesh, had but too few of his Spirit; *Isaiah* is so bold to tell us, That by that time God had measur'd off, with the long Ell of his Justice, almost the whole Piece to Destruction, for their unhappy Apostasie from the Holy Practices of their Great Father, but a short Remnant was left, that following his steps, arrived at last in the Heavenly Canaan with him.

From the lovely face of that Heaven, enamell'd with so many shining *Stars*, which *Abraham's* Eyes beheld in the clearest night: Turn now thine own, Reader, and gaze on another enriched with Lights, surmounting far all those, and of a more eternal duration than they, illustrating the Great *Abraham's* name. 'Tis his Splendent Faith,

(*) Prius promiserat semen tanquam pulverem terræ, hic sicut stellas cæli, illud potuit filios Naturales, hoc Spirituales significare. Ainsworth.

attended on by all her Train of Graces, expatiating all the Rooms of his Soul, by a ravishing Dilatation, to receive in all the Joys of this so vast a Blessing, and giving it the most welcome Entertainment that her little Powers are able in this narrow condition she *is in*. 'Twas mighty Faith that brought him out of his Country, but what is this that passeth him out of *himself*, leaving all his Reason and Senses behind him, combating against all the Impossibilities of *Nature*, when there was not the least ground to fix the Foot of Belief on, but what was ready to sink under him; All hopes as tottering as his reeling *Body*, and as dead as his *Sarah's Womb*; yet now to hope against all Hope, and out of Death it self to believe out Life, and that with a *Courage* as resolute and immovable, as admits not the least *Allay* of Fear or Doubt; but to give Glory to God, by resigning himself up by a perfect dependance on the Infallibility of the Promise, and full assurance of the Faithfulness and Power of him that made it, without the least staggering thought: This is such a Faith in the Perfection and Flower of it, that doth render him so exceeding acceptable in the Eyes of God, that he shall be henceforth confirmed in a perfect Immunity from all the dangers of Sin and Death, which shall never prevail eternally against him, and shall qualifie him so compleatly for all the Honours of Divine *Friendship*, that he shall be taken into the Bosom, and for ever acknowledged as the Faithful *Friend* of God. As he hath justified his Faith by so noble Fruit as this, so will God justify it too, by setting his Seal to

the Truth and Excellency of it, and Justifying Him the Subject of it, and stamping on him the Mark and Honourable Character of a truly Religious and most sincere *Believer*; Abraham believed in the Lord, and it was counted to him for Righteousness.

Come hither, thou that art called a Christian, see the *Criterion* of thy future Estate; Thou say'st thou believest, thou doest well, do not the Devils also Believe and Tremble? But hast thou Abraham's Justifying Faith? Take a Survey of the Weakness of thine, and the Vanity of thy Hopes for Heaven. Abraham travelled out of all, and cheerfully gave up himself to be led by the Absolute Will of his God, when thou lodgest still in the dark Entry of Nature, and laughest at all the Invitations of his Grace: Thou mockest the Messengers of God that are sent to call thee, and sticking still in the Creature and Self, disputest his Authority to rule thee. Abraham feasted himself in the Joys of an Invisible Saviour, and made many a Sweet Banquet upon the Promise, while thou art guzling on the draughts of Lust, and greedily sucking in the deadly Potions of Sin, little remembring there is Death in the Pot, that Poysons thy Soul and Hopes together. He rejoiced in the Children of his Faith, which should make up a Church unto God, while they are all the Objects of thy Malicious Hate, who bear the least shadow of his Image upon them. He bore up a Spirit against all the Temptations of Life, and under all the Enticements of a Great and Rich Estate, ever devoting the Cream and Elixir of his Thoughts and Heart unto God,

when

when thou lockest up thy Soul in a narrow Ware-house, and drownest all thy Hopes in a shallow Stream. He dreaded not the formidable Powers of the World, that had captiv'd a Member of the Church, whilst thou (with *Saul*) art breathing out Menaces and Slaughter, and shooting all thy Darts into the Heart of Christ: He had strength to wrestle with God himself, and would not be beaten back without a Blessing, when thy Spirit sinketh with the very thoughts of that Power, whom thy wicked Life hath made thine *Enemy*; He comes back laden with the Riches of a Promise, which should make himself and all his true Children Happy, when thy poor Heart is courting other Delights, and is a perfect Stranger to the Pleasures of a Saviour. Go Christian, get a better *Faith*, that may Justifie thy *Person* before God, since be sure such works as these can never Justifie thy *Faith* before Men.

Abraham thus assured of an infinite Posterity, grows now solicitous and thoughtful for them, he discovers the nature of those cares that Afflict the Bosoms of every Godly *Parent*. He is fearful that his Children may deviate from the steps of his own Uniform Obedience and Righteousness, nor wear the same Livery of Grace that adorned his Loyal Spirit, and *Hallowed* all his Actions. His first Care is to enjoy a *Progeny*, and his next, that they might enjoy God and be Good. How rarely doth this Holy *Anxiety* oppress the Minds of Men! How would *Abraham* have swooned then, to have seen some of his Impious Children sacrificing their Sons and Daughters unto Devils.

The *Angels* themselves were created subject to a possible *Folly*, and Multitudes of them fell by a dreadful *Apostacy*; He had reason to fear that his *Children*, who were but *Dust*, might be foolish too, and forgetful of the *Rock of their Salvation*, who might therefore sell them into the hands of their *Enemies*, who would surely deprive them of their Fruitful *Canaan*: Nor was this fear the least *Flaw* in the Jewel of his Faith, but rather an Holy Ray that darted from it. It abates not at all of the Perfections of God, that he is Jealous. The Church is his Spouse, he is Married to her, and would have her Holy as Himself. If *Abraham* to the Promise of a Seed, and an Inheritance for them, might have another to secure them in it, by a Faith and Spirit like his own, which would entitle them to Divine Favour and Protection, surely this would Terminate his Desires, and compleat up all his Happiness.

Abraham is content to go Issueless still, rather than be the miserable Parent of *Rebels* against Heaven. The Arrows that are shot by wicked Children against the Honour of God, pierce by the way through the hearts of their wounded fathers, and make them bleed. God is so well pleased with the Workings of *Abraham's* thoughts, and took it so kindly from him, that he had honoured him by so absolute Resignation of his Faith, on the bare word of his Promise, That from hence forth he shall have little cause to question the Performance of all his future Engagements, for now he resolves to confirm them all by stronger Bars than those that Heaven and Earth are environed

roned with. He is content to enter into a Sacred Covenant with him, that shall oblige his Holiness, Honour and Truth in such irrefragable Tyes, that *Abraham's Heirs* may Sue him at their pleasure upon the Violation of them, and shall have liberty to plead the *Breach of Articles* against him in the Court of Honour, should he fail in any point of Performance. Nor were they backward (as *Vatablus* tells us) for notwithstanding themselves were so careless in keeping the *Counter-conditions*, that obliged them to Obedience and Duty; And by their continual Violations, had evacuated the whole *Covenant*, and wrenched off all the *Seals*; yet would they be so Impudent, to reproach him with a *Failure* on his Part, and frequently twit him with it, when their *Treacheries* had at any time provoked him to bring in an Enemy upon them, or put them into Banishment and Sufferings. *Recordare foederis inter segmenta iniis.* Remember the League made with *Abraham our Father*, when the *Heifer* was cut in twain, and thou passedst through the parts thereof. There was a Custom (as elsewhere, so) in *Chaldea* (whereof therefore *Abraham* could not be ignorant) That for confirming Covenants, these Ceremonies passed amongst them; A *Beast* was killed and divided into two equal Parts, which Parts were brought forth and laid at some distance over against each other, the *Federates* passing between them, and solemnly imprecating on themselves the same Death and Ruine, (so to be killed and cut in pieces as the *Beast*) if they should first break the *Covenant* and Agreement made between them. The equal Division of the

Beast seeming to represent the *Unity of Will* in both Parties, and their mutual satisfaction in the Conditions of the League. In Conformity to this Custom, *Abraham* is ordered to get ready his *Heifer*, and with that, a *Goat* and a *Ram*, all of three years Age; and to these a *Turtle Dove* and a young *Pigeon*, to prepare and place them in order, against such time as the Lord would please to come down to pass thorough them. In that the Beasts were multiplied, it signified a surer *Ratification* of the Covenant. The Conditions on Gods part were, That he would surely give unto *Abraham* for his Posterity the whole Kingdoms of *Canaan* for a Possession. *Abraham* Conditions for his Children, That they therefore should keep the Laws of the Lord, and walk in his ways, as himself would give them *Example*. Gods Passing thorough the divided parts in the Appearance of *Fire* and *Smoke*, and *Abraham*'s walking through the midst of them, confirmed the Covenant, and finished the Transaction. Now must this be unto *Abraham* an infallible Assurance, God could not deny Himself, nor his Covenant. He may cease disputing for the future, How shall I know that I shall inherit it? There are Authors that make *Critical* Observations, first on the Age of the Beasts, which were All to be three years Old, and signified that this Covenant related only to the *Carnal* Posterity of *Abraham*. (for there follows another for his *Spiritual*, which was to endure for evermore) who should enjoy *Canaan* during *Three* Remarkable Terminations of time. The first from *Abraham* himself to *Moses*; The second, from

Moses,

Moses to *David*; The third, from *David* to *Christ*, when by their bitter Usage and Cruelty towards Him, the whole *Articles* were torn to pieces, and themselves sent packing out of their good Land, having no longer a Promise of it.

The *Miracle* of Gods Condescention in binding Himself up to his Creatures, is a Subject for *Angels* to pry into, and for *Saints* to praise him for ever: Yet is not this all that *Abraham* shall be gratified in, there is still a farther Honour God will confer on his Favourite: He shall be admitted into his own *Privy-Council* of Heaven, and the *Arcana Imperii*, the Mysteries of State that are lock'd up in the secret Cabinet of his Bosom, shall be disclosed to him. He shall here have a perfect *Prospect* into all the Occurrences of his Family for many hundred years after, which first he shall discover in a *Type*, and then in clearer words!

First, The *Beasts* and the *Birds* do more generally shew him the different Natures of his Children; some bearing brutish Affections, creeping upon the Face of the Earth as *Beasts*; others *Soaring* in a more Spiritual Element, All their aims aspiring after Heaven. Again more particularly, The very *Heifer*, a Laborious *Slave* subjected to the *Collar*, shall Prophesie to him the Servitude of his Children under the *Egyptian Yoke*, the very Age of her shall shew him the term of that Slavery for *Three Generations* together. But then the *Turtle*, a Solitary *Bird*, that delights in the *Desart*, shall shew him also their Removal thence, and wandering in the *Wilderness* for *Forty years*. And the *Pidgeon*, a *Fowl* that loves to be *Hous'd*, shall lead

merrily pass their years away, they laugh at Fear, not a Melancholly Thought dares approach their Hearts; They Correct the Insolency of those Groundless Dreads that suggest but the least *Jealousie* of any future Danger. Every day is an *Holiday* with them; They keep a perpetual *Carnival*, and distill all the Luxurious *Issues* of their Country into *Spirits*, which serve them to exhilarate their *Own* into Mirth and Jollity; They Sacrifice to their *Idols* in profuse *Libations*, and pay them the liberal Tributes of their grateful Affections under all the Peace and Prosperity they enjoy. While now the Fatal Sentence had passed out from Heaven against them, and the *Hand-writing* of Ruine stuck on the *Walls* of every House in *Canaan*, and there shall rest till they undermine themselves, and an heavy hand of Judgment gives Fire to those Trains which shall surprizingly blow them up for ever. Take heed, Reader, the case be not thine own: *Sin* is an *Engineer in the Dark*, that is ever contriving the means of our utter Desolation. There is a *Faux* in thine own Bosom, with a *Match* ready lighted to do *Execution*, while thou dreamest not in the least of a Danger upon thee, and art all the while heaping up *Wrath* against the day of *Wrath*, and *Piling* up those *Faggots* with thine own Hands, which shall shortly be enkindled to burn thee out of all thine Earthly Comforts, and send thee yet into hotter Flames than these. And whilst thou lyeest in the Lap of these *Dalilah's*, God knows how soon the *Philistines* may be upon thee; And what knowest thou, but the Decree may be gone forth against thee

thee already, and thou hast nothing that secures thy Stay but the pure *Patience* of that God whom daily thou abusest, that doth yet wait, and Reprieves thee from the *Writ of Execution*. 'Tis well known that Those in the *Wilderness*, in the midst of their security had an *Oath* clapt upon them because of their Provocations, which they could never get off 'till their Carcasses fell; they were so fettered by it that it was impossible for them to get into *Canaan*: And yet had they a few *sun-shine Summers* granted them, (as these condemned *Amorites*,) they ran about a while with God's *Curse* upon them, as the manacled Prisoners of his Wrath. To small ends of true Comfort and Safety is it to be thrown upon a *Couch* of Ease and Pleasure, (wrapt in soft and silken Wreaths of Security and Peace) and there to slumber 'till Death and Judgment dragg thee thence, and tumble thee down into a Bed of Flames for ever.

C H A P. VI.

Abraham by Sarah's Perswasions goeth in unto Hagar, she conceiveth and grows proud; being afflicted of her Mistress she fleeth into the Wilderness, where an Angel meets her and turns her back. The Birth of Ishmael.

WHILE Abraham walks on (in Confidence of this Covenant) with full Vigour and Strength of Soul; Sarah's Hopes decline with her Years, and comes limping after him with a weary foot: The Promise of a Seed had been made to her Lord, but it was not yet revealed by what Venter he should enjoy it, most probably from any other than her own Barren one: And rather than this Tree of Righteousness should want Branches and Fruit, she is content that he Inoculate on a Crab-stock: (No wonder then the Production prove but wild and sowre, participating more of the Juice of the degenerate Root than the sweeter Nature of the true Plant;) but rather than to be no Mother, she is satisfied with being one at second Hand, and is willing to rock her Maids Cradle; and doubtless she had great Kindness for Hagar, who was most happy in such a Mistress, that would gratifie her faithful Service with that unusual Civility of sending her Husband to Bed to her. This is not the ordinary manner of Womens Kindness, who

who will part with every thing sooner than the *Monopoly* of their Husbands *Love*. But *Sarah's* Case began to be desperate, who notwithstanding the repeated Promises of Children made to her *Abraham*, was yet never the less Barren than before; and it being never yet said that the Heir should be born of her Body, she knew not but that God himself might inspire her to make the *Motion*, and speak the good Word to her *Lord* for *Hagar*; therefore she contrives to lend away a piece of his Heart to her *Maid*, and to admit her as the secondary *Object* of his Affections, and should not much repent it, if she still contain her self within her Limits, and pay her the dutiful Respect owing to so kind a *Mistress*.

'Tis disputed whether *Abraham* or *Sarah*, either or neither of them, sinn'd against God in this Action. For Him 'tis argued, that he did it not from any Motion of Lust, who notwithstanding his *Wife's* Barrenness, had never been tempted to wander in his *Affections* from her, but humbly waited upon God to effect his Promises by those means which himself had decreed to produce them, and had never upbraided his dearest Wife of her *Sterility*, the only Impediment to his Happiness in a Son. Nor was it contrary to the Custom of *Nations*, and that as yet there was no Law expressed against *Polygamy*. Nor was he himself first in the Motion, but was led to it by the Desire, Approbation, and Consent of his *Sarah*. But above all, since God had told him that all the *Nations of the Earth* should be blessed in his seed, he might possibly incur

curr the danger of God's displeasure, if by any default of his own he should hinder the *Salvation* of the World. The Promise being only to himself and not unto *Sarah*, of having such Issue as might render it *happy*; he had now waited already *Ten Years* for the Accomplishment of that Promise, and might possibly think himself obliged from the *Tradition* so common, *Si Mulier non pepererit intra decem Annos, tenetur ejus Maritus ad primam, secundam ducere Uxorem*, — If the Woman bear no Child within ten Years, her Husband may take a second Wife to the first. These are the *Arguments* commonly used for *Abraham*.

For *Sarah* 'tis pleaded, That she bore the Infelicity of her *Barrenness* with an humble resignation, and not with that Impatiency as afterwards did *Rachel* her Grand-daughter: And that she thought her self unworthy so great an Honour as to be the Mother of the *blest Seed*, and did not ill at all in consulting the Means by which so great a Blessing might be derived to Mankind; she attempered her self to the *Divine Will*, and will not envy that glory to her *Hand-maid*. She took it heavily that so great a Person as *Abraham* should be deprived of the Blessing of *Children*, and that her own Incapacity should make void the Promises of God. See my Lord *Abraham*, God hath restrained unworthy me from Bearing, thou vainly expectest *Children* from me; and I plainly perceive that God intends me not the Honour of making thee a joyful Father, if he did, he hath the *Key of the Womb*, and might easily heal my Barrenness:

but

but since 'tis not his good pleasure, I humbly submit my self and chearfully give way to another: It matters not much whether I bear or no, but it concerns all the World that thou hast that *seed* which must make it haypy: The Child of my *Maid* will be *Mine* by Law, and I shall embrace and *Adopt* it as my own. In this *Glass* we may visibly perceive her Reverence and Love to her Husband, and beyond that, her Pious Care for all the World; and is blameable in nothing but what is common to all her Sex, a little Impatience and over-running the *Decree* of God, who is wise enough to *flush* our callow *Precipitancies*, and *Ripen* them all to flye to his Glory. And it may be a greater than *Abraham* or *Sarah* was here in the *Council*; for we may well know how serviceable *Hagar* proves to the whole Church of God, in lending not only an *Hand* to dress up an *Allegory*, but her *Shoulder* too, to juttle out the *Old Covenant*, which was so unwilling to give way to the *New*.

The *Hebrews* (*) to keep up the Honour of *Abraham*, and that he degraded not himself by entring into the Chamber of *Hagar*, will needs have us to believe that she was of Royal Extraction, and *Daughter* to the King of *Egypt*; they will not own him to have entred into a meaner *Bed* than that of a *Princess*; but while they seek to keep up the Reputation of their *Father*, they see not how foully they betray the ill manners of their *Mother*, who after her Con-

(*) Hanc fuisse Pharaonis filiam dicunt Hebraei. Lyra.

ception treated the Daughter of a King so hardly. Be her *Birth* what it will, 'twas Honour enough to *Hagar* to be second in *Abrahams* Affections, and for his sake to wear the Dignity in *Holy Records* of being the Grand-mother of twelve *Princes*.

Hagar's Spirits swell with her *Belly*, she nourishes the *Embryo* and a *Tympany* together: The height of her *Pride* plainly demonstrates the *lowness* of her *Birth*. Right Noble *Blood* sweetly streams in the happy Channel of its own rich *Veins*, when the baser *Gore*, like *Jordan*, breaks all bounds, and *overfloweth all its Banks*: There are no *Reins* can bridle up the Insolency of a proud *Usurper*. He that manages well enough the little *Pinnacle* of a smaller *Fortune*, grows giddy when riding with a *Top-Gallant*. *Hagar* humble enough in the *Closet*, grows *Arrogant* under her *Preferment* to the *Bed of Sarah*. Behold, she which dragged two *Kings* at the *Chariot Wheels* of her *Beauty*, is here despised in the *Eyes* of her own *Maid*. The *Concubine* of *Abraham* insults over his *Lady*. Pretenders to *Religion*, who force a *Kiss* from *Jesus*, (with *Judas*) Sell his *Person*, and break the *Peace* of his *Family*, when those that of a long time have lain in his *Bosom* (with *John*) seek above every thing to preserve it. The young *Jilts* of an *Upstart Profession*, have frequently rent the *Church* into those gaping *Schisms* which an whole *Council* of *Fathers* have hardly been able to close up. This *Under-sucker* from the first discovery of her *budding out*, waxes most insufferably haughty in that *sap* which she had thiev'd from the

Top

(*)
Lyra:

Top branch. 'Tis she that must make her Lord happy in that *Fruit*, which his *Sarah* had never the Honour to bear him ; (*) as if God himself had given her a *Bill of Divorce* from that Dignity and *Abraham's* Bed together, to make sole room for her self, the *Elect* Mother of the great *Heir* that was to come : She seems a *Type* of *Diotrephes*, who would *shove* out the beloved Disciple, to get the Preheminence into his own hands over all the *Household* of God. *Ambition* is a dangerous *Pestilence* in the sacred Building, and eats through the very *Rafters* of it. This *Bond-woman* grows so intolerably high, that common Prudence necessitates her humbling : *Sarah* is resolved to cut her *Comb*, and break the Egg of this *Cockatrice* ere it be hatched into a Serpent ; if she *hiss* already, she may chance to bite hereafter. How doth God frequently blast those *Councils* that derive not direction from the *Sanctuary* ! Now is the goodly *frame* of *Sarah's* Project fallen upon her own *Head*, and ready to break it, while she vainly contrived to build the House of *Abraham* with this untempered *Mortar* : So infallibly will they be deceived who think to prefer the *Flugarine* Humours of *Nature* into a Conjunction with Divine Grace, and put them to Bed together in hopes of an eternal *Issue* : where instead of Generating an Heir to *Abraham*, they fall to scratching each other, and nothing appears but

(*) *Despexit eam tanquam a divino Promisso repudiata.*
Lyra:

Remarques on the Life

a mad *Ishmael*, that flies in the Face of every one, without any Favour to its own *Benefactors*. Gold and Dirt make an ill Mixture, and but daubs the Fingers of him that endeavours to temper them together. In short, *Sarah* perceives her Folly, and too late repents her precipitant *Counsels*; who by calling up her Maid to stand *Cheek by Jole* with her self, soon discovered the danger of being overtopp'd in her own *House*, should she thus go on to raise her *Heels* so high, and perk up so loftily as she began: She resolves therefore to put in her *Bill* of Complaint, though she knew not the Issue of her *Suit*, since (she fears) the *Judge* himself is a Party against her, and too openly favours her *Adversary*: Yea, she is bold in her *Declaration* to Accuse him downright of an unjust *Compliance*, and (should that fail) she doubts not to prove him guilty of too great a *Connivance* at the Insolencies of his *Minion*: And was really jealous that her New Sheets had feloniously drawn away all his old Affections from her self. But should she find him no kind *Chancellor*, she resolves to Appeal unto God Himself, who would surely look into the *Merits* of her *Cause*, and pass a most equitable Sentence for her.

Abraham the sole *Arbiter* of this Difference (mindful of his *Sarah's* Fidelity to him under all the Temptations of *Pharaoh's* Court) cannot now justifiably warp from his Integrity to her for the sake of any *Egyptian* Slave, and is wise enough to allay the heat of *Sarah's* fury, by giving her satisfactory Evidence of the coldness

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of his Love to *Hagar*, which he could manifest in nothing more clearly to her, than by calling her up to the *Bench*, and leaving her there to pass her own *Decree*. Behold thy *Maid* is in thy hand, do so her as it pleaseth thee: Very Prudent and Admirable *Justice*, since (who is ignorant) that from the little *Sparks* of Contention, inkindled by *Ambition* and Jealousie, on the Spirit of *Women*, have too often issued those *Fires* which have burned to a dreadful Conflagration. The *Sword* in their *Lips* have been snatched thence into the *Hands* of their Husbands, and made bloody work in the Church of God. *Abraham* yields the *Concubine* to be blown up, to prevent the running of the Flame any farther in his *Family*; and (for ought we can find) *Sarah* spares for no Powder. How happy and Righteous were we, if in this we could imitate our *Father*, and in the bustling Broils between *Flesh* and *Spirit*, ever take part with the high-born *Soul*, labouring under all the proud *Tyrannies* of her Insulting baser Enemy, delivering her up to suffer the just penalties of her Insolence and Folly, who must be dealt with as a *Slave*, and thoroughly humbled, lest she make the whole *House* too hot for us here, and at last lead us away Prisoners with her, and both perish together. — I keep under my *Body*, and bring it into subjection, lest I my self become a cast-away.

But tho *Paul* was happy and successful in the Methods of his *Discipline* over his *Flesh*; yet all the severity *Sarah* could make use of, did little work any Change upon her *Bond-woman*, to reduce her within *Bounds* of her Duty. O the

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of the Great Abraham.

III

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Plague of an untameable *Spirit*, that baffles all the Arts of both Heaven and Earth to humble it! Neither *Frowns* nor *Smiles*, neither *Stroaks* nor *Stroakings*, neither *Judgments* nor *Mercies* make the least impression upon this impenetrable *Rock*, to melt into one drop of *Reluctancy*, till Blood flowing from the holy veins of a *God-Man* fall upon it, and dissolve the *Adamant* all into Water.

Hagar will *Break* sooner than Bow, and chooses rather to flye from, than bend to her Mistress, she resolves to lye in none rather than a *Truckle-Bed*: So grievous is it for *Nature*, to fall in the price of it self, that it prefers *Annihilation* when it cannot attain the Ends of its Ambition. *Achitophels* great Spirit hates to survive the funerals of his *Reputation*, and suffers rather an Halter, than dishonour: while *Grace* shrowds its own Worth, and blushingly veyls its meritorious Vertues. *Moses* his *Mask* is still worn by those excellent Souls that are ever on the *Mount*, when vain and empty Minds rage and grow angry with the World for not Adoring the *Shrine* of their *Nothingness*. And what is *Hagar* now broken off from her *Mistresse*, but a poor sorry contemptible creature in the *Wilderness*; while I see her sitting by the water-side, desolate and comfortless, ruminating in her Mind all the past Transactions of her Life, and very probably now brought most sensibly to bewayl that stubbornness and ill-nature that had thus reduc'd her to this Extremity? She seems too lively a *Shadow* of those miserable Souls, whom their own wretchedness

and

and Divine Justice, hath Excommunicated from the *Church* for ever, into a more fatal *Lake*, where they have now Time enough (if an Eternity suffices) to commune with their own Hearts, of all the unspeakable Kindnesses of a God towards them thro the whole *Series* of their Life, who all along courted them with the Varieties of his good *Providence*, and yet further with all the Delicacies of his *Ordinances*, allowing them the rich Privileges of his *House* and *Table* ; under all which, instead of an Humble and Reverend Demeanour in his *Family*, a Grateful and Affectionate Sense of his *Goodness*, with a lowly Reflection on their own *Unworthiness*, they waxed Wanton and Proud, breaking all the Bonds of Obedience and Duty, fomenting *Schisms* and Divisions in the *Church*. Murmuring against *Moses* and *Aaron*, bringing all things into so perfect Confusion, that the *Earth* it self disdaining to bear them any longer, opened her *Jaws* to provide them a *Grave*, where they have nothing else to do but bitterly to lament their *Distraction* and *Madness*, in not timely considering the concerns of their Peace, which now (alas) are hid from their *Eyes*.

Yet *Hagar's* case is not thus desperate; she bore along with her that Pledge of Heavens care and her *Masters* pity, as well might serve to cherish in her some hope for commiseration and relief. She had not so long lived in *Abrahams* house to gather no fragments of Religion, the very *Rebels* of the *Family* have yet learned to howle in their *Extremities* for some help: *In their affliction they will seek me early.* And it may be God had *Allured* her

into this *Wilderness*, to teach her the Lesson of *Humiliation*, which she could never take forth in the day of her *Prosperity*; therefore is an *Angel* sent from Heaven to *Speak comfortably to her*. And her Repentance hath procured to her the Honour of the first *Visit* that ever *Angel* is yet noted to have made into the World: Or rather the Prince of *Angels* sent himself, cloathed with beams of *brightness*, and those *Celestial Qualities* which make her own him to be, as indeed he was, the Lord *Jehovah*, [ver. 13.] The poor wretch was trudging home towards *Egypt*, with an heavy Body and an heavier Mind, and was now resting her self by a Fountain of Water (increased by a contribution from her Eyes, which she hardly stops to clear up and look on so *Illustrious a Comforter*.) Natural Tears shed for self, need but Gods presence to strike the Heart, and hallow them into Tears for Sin. *Hagar* admires to hear her self so readily named, and in the same moment her Faults detected; Where is the guiltless Name that God can speak to from Heaven? If she were *Sarabs* Maid, what did she there? Had she her *Mistresses* pass-port with her? When we flie from our Callings, we flie from God, whose Law commands us to a fixed Station, and whose Providence watcheth over us in it, and whose Correction reacheth us in all our wandrings from it. We shall find little reward at the Evening of Life, for sitting all the day Idle in the Market-place of the World. 'Tis a sad and unanswerable End of our Lives, to Eat and Drink and rise up to Play. The Epilogue of that Comedy will be spoken in Hell. *Idleness* is but One of *Hagars* crimes, Folly marches after,

after, and *Misery* brings up the Rear of both. Camest thou from *Abraham's* Family, the happiest in all the Earth, and made only unfortunate by thee? Canst thou forsake the *Household of Faith*, and be safe? Art thou Stealing away with the Fruit of thy Masters *Loins*, to give it a Birth in *Egyptian Aire*, and Robbing thine own *Child* of all the Blessings that an *Heir* of *Abraham* may hope to Inherit? And whether wilt thou go? to those again that sold thee out for a Slave? Canst thou expect to render thy condition any where better, than there from whence thou camest? The stubbornness of thy *Heart*, was the cause of the bitterness of thy Life. 'Twas thine own Pride that justly incensed thy *Mistress*. Nor canst thou look down on thy swelling *Womb* without blushing at thine own *Ingratitude*. Return therefore and pay her the Honour, her Merits, and thine own Duty requires from thee. All the World will be but *Bush* and *Brake* to thee, a very barren *Wilderness* to the Comforts of thy Masters House. *Hagar* (as once that Woman of *Samaria*) by a discovery of her private Concerns, discerning the Blessed *Angel* to be more than *Man*, doth not Impiously pin her own Guilt on her *Mistresses* Sleeve, nor dares to Impeach her in the least; shew as too conscious of her own Crimes to conceal them from him, that (she saw) very well knew them already. This *Modesty* and the tacite Confession of her own Imprudence, fits her for Mercy, and sets her free from further *Rebukes*.

But this glorious Messenger had another *Errand*: He came not from Heaven only to return her back to her *Mistress*, however to Encourage her
to

to it, he will be so favourable to give her a *Light* into the dark *Cells* of her Womb, and discover to her what lay concealed there. And as *Abraham* had a *Vision* into all the *Contingencies* of his Family, so shall his *Concubine* be *blessed above Women*, in the Knowledge of the Sex, Nature, Condition, and Fortunes of her yet unborn *Child*. The *Angel* is *Godfather* indeed, and gives him a Name: A name that shall live and flourish in the Mouths and Memories of a numerous and durable *Posterity*, whose condition and manner of Life, (he Prophecies) shall be strange and different from all the World. A generation of Men that shall delight to *Rove* as a wild *Ass* in the *Wilderness*, to keep a-part by themselves in the *Desarts* of the Earth, *Fierce*, *Cruel*, and *Warlike*; such are the *Saracens* and *Arabians*, and such is their *Quality* and kind of Life to this day.

Hagar devoutly returns the Glory of his grace unto God, who had beyond all Expectation regarded her in Affliction by so glorious a Legate. The Beams of whose *Majesty* were so kind to her, to leave her the *Light of her Eyes*, which she admires was not *lost* by so dazzling an Object; and Baptizes the very *Well* with its own Water, giving it an everlasting Name, that still bears the *Memoire* of the Mercy of being *Able to live after she had seen the Lord*.

With a glad Heart, and full resolutions of better *Conformity*, she returns back to her *Lady*, and doubtless very humbly submits her self to her *Grace*; who receives her in obedience to the order of Heaven, which seldom sends ill *Members* to the Church after the Convictions of *Conscience* upon

upon them : *We are never good in our Callings, till God meet and directs us.* Onesimus was All Hands for Philemon, when God had changed his Heart. *Grace qualifieth us for universal service to God and Men.* Abraham (to whom doublets the transaction with the *Angel* in the Wilderness, was very accurately repeated by *Hagar*) provides like himself for the Birth of his *Child* ; and hath great hopes of the Son that an *Angel* had already given Name to : Who when he came into the World finds a Father that had already passed Eighty Six years on the Earth.

CH A P. VII.

The Covenant of Grace renewed and consumed to Abraham, and the Spiritual Heirs of his Faith for an Everlasting Testament, that neither Sin nor Death shall ever be able to dissolve.

TWas in that *Chilly and Withered Age*, when now Time had snowed upon him, and he was ready to *stumble upon the dark Mountains*, and the Grave waited for him ; and his Hopes of *Sarah's* Body were as desperate and cold, as his own Blood and Spirits ; that the Lord made his Fifth *Visit and Appearance* to his beloved *Abraham*. He is so far from casting him off in his *Old Age*, or *foraking him when his strength faileth*, that behold he cometh with such *Cordials* in his Hand as shall brisk up and invigorate his fainty Soul, and renew
his

his strength as an Eagle. He shall have *new Eyes* that shall pierce deeper into the Mystery of the God-head, and enable him to see more *clearly*. He shall have *new Feet* to Walk on before his God more *firmly* (one would have thought he had come already (at this Age) to the end of his *Course*, but now he must walk on still.) He shall have *new Ears*, to hear *Himself* and his *Lady* called by other *Names*. He shall have *new and better Promises* for his Faith and Hopes to build on more *strongly*. A new *Sacrament* to establish and confirm those hopes more *Infallibly*: A *Wife* who shall no more be called *Barren*: A new *Heir* that shall make him the Father of *Kings*. A Family that shall bare a new Mark and *Impress*. And all these in the very despair and evening of his Days, to let all the World see the Almighty *Power* of Him, who from the beginning hath wrought all things out of Nothing, and can make things to start up and be, which do not yet Appear, to give Life to our *Hopes* and *Souls*.

God thinks it but a small thing, that he had already confirmed to *Abraham* and his Children, all the Kingdoms of *Canaan* for a Possession by his Oath. And tho' he foresaw well enough that there would be but too many of them, whose Affections would be incorporate into those fruitful Fields and Pastors, and all their utmost desires centred in the exuberant Productions of them, yet had he given ample Testimony of his kindness to *Abraham*, in making so rich and noble Provision for the worst of his Family, whose Ingratitude to himself, and Apostacy from their Great Fathers Faith and Principles, might per-
haps

haps in time raise the Stomack of that very Land against them, which had gotten a custom of *Vomiting out her Inhabitants*: Those whom she saw making so ill use of her Bounty, as so surfeit on her Dainties, and abuse them to the dishonour of her great Lord; for whom therefore having made Portions so perfectly connatural to themselves, by that Covenant, He proceeds now to a discovery of a better *Inheritance* than *Canaan*, and perfectly adequate too, to the more pure and refined inclinations of those better Children of *Abraham*, on whom the very Features of his brave Soul should survive and appear, and who should not idly boast in the *privilege* of his *Blood* running in their *Veins*, when they bore not the least shadow of his *Faith* and Goodness in their *Hearts*. For these *express Images* of their Fathers *Graces*, He knows no better Heritage to confer upon them, than his own most *Blessed Self*. He hath portion enough that hath a God: — *Blessed is the People whose God is the Lord*. Nothing less than He, can be a proportionable Portion for the Spiritual Heirs of *Abraham's Faith*. Therefore to let him see the unexpressible Riches of his Grace, and the high Contrivances of his Heart, which was ever working into more and greater Manifestations of his *Love* towards him, he passes from *Heaven* to break in pieces all the Barrs of *Opposition* and *Despair*; not only that little one of his Wife's *Barrenness*, which obstructed all his hopes of an Heir, but also those mighty ones of Sin and Hell, which hinder the World of the blessings of a *Saviour*.

Now

Now the better to *Illustrate* the Glory of that *Grace*, which he is ready to Seal to his Dearest *Abraham*, He will lay the Foundation of it in a more Conspicuous and Brighter *Revelation* of Himself to him, than ever yet he had the Happiness to enjoy: By drawing the Curtain from the profound *Abyss* of the Incomprehensible *Deity*, and flashing out a clearer *Beam* of his *Majesty* upon his Understanding and Mind, in the further Light and Joy whereof, he shall henceforth walk all the days of his Life, as in the Shine of a thousand *Suns*. Knowledge is the foundation of Faith, and the greater Degrees of it, are the enlarging the *Field* wherein the *Contemplations* of the Soul more unlimitedly walk with sweeter *Liberty*, while Her desires stretch out themselves by the utmost Extensions, after the Infinite Good they discover: And though they despair to reach it here below (*for God is Great and we know him not, so great that we cannot know him*) yet 'tis no small delight to them to enjoy a *Pisgah-sight* of that Glorious *Canaan*. God had already shewn unto *Abraham*, what he would be unto him under *Metaphorical Expressions* of *Shield* and *Reward*. But he knows not yet distinctly enough, what he is in *Himself*, and he should be infinitely happier in a more satisfactory discovery of his Nature, such as might *brighten* his Judgment and Apprehensions. The greatest part of the Worlds Religion is *Samaritan*, *Men worship they know not what*; but *Abraham* shall know Him he worships, and shall be guided by the light of such an *Attribute*, that shall open his *Intellectuals* into the Sence of the *Divine Nature*, and such a One too; as shall

be

be most naturally effectual to work up his other *Faculties* into a chearful and unreserved *Resignation* of his whole Person and Actions to the Will of God; when he shall find that he hath all those Infinite Perfections in him, which compleat and fill up the *Blessedness* of a God, without going out of *Himself* to fetch in any Contributions to make him more *Happy* than he is already. If therefore such a God would make over *Himself* to him, and give him an Interest in that *All-sufficiency* which he himself both is and hath, *Abraham* should have little cause to complain of Defects in the Perfection of his Felicity, since he hath every thing (according to his Capacity) whatsoever an *All-sufficient* God hath, to make himself perfectly Happy: Let him stretch out the Appetites of his Soul to the remotest expansions of Eternity, even thither will this God follow him, to Supply and Perfect up all his desires.

This is the delicious *Prospect* that his Spiritual Eyes shall be irradiated to gaze on; far transcending all the outward *Objects* of a Transitory World, or the *Canaan* in it that formerly he had commanded him to *View*. This is that Luscious Banquet he prepares for *Abraham's* Faith and Affections to Feast on. And methinks, *Reader*, thou hast no reason to complain of Scarcity, when thou art placed after him at the same Table, with an Addition of many more Viands which his Great Son hath brought from Heaven with him. The standing *Dish* that every Son of *Abraham* is commanded to break his Fast on, is God *Himself*. And he is enough without any other

other *Sallads* from *Canaan*. Yet hath he strangely Improved himself under the Gospel, where he hath dressed and set out himself with all the pleasing advantages to our *Palats* imaginable. And when all this is *done*, how few are there found, that relish any Sweetness in him. Our Squeamish Stomacks, with those nice Children of *Abraham*, Will none of him. Our Sick Souls Loath this precious *Manna*. But art thou in *Health*, Reader, that thy Soul tastes not a God? Does *Onions* and *Garlick*, *Wind* and *Vanity* please thee better; Go take thy Repast with *Ephraim*, and see whether thou beest not grip'd at the last. 'Tis himself indeed that must give us eyes to behold his own Beauties and holy Senses, to relish his own Sweetness.

Do but observe with what Extasie of Passion the great *Abraham's* Soul was seized at the first Breaking out of so transcendent a *Mercy*: He Bows himself to the Earth with the same Prostration, as a poor *Indigent* would do that had *Scepters* and *Kingdoms* Sealed up to him by a *Royal Hand* and *Bounty*. The former *Largeesses* of *Canaan* cost him but a few humble *Cringes*, but here he Sinks down flat under the weight of this excessive Glory, the having a *God* secured to him by *Covenant*. He lies Astonished on the Ground before him, struck down in Amazement at the thought of so vast a Condescension of a God making over Himself, with all the Glories of *Heaven* and *Earth*, to a contemptible *Worm* extracted no higher than the poor Dust he lay on. When the frequent *Sound* of the same miraculous Grace beating into the Ears of thee and me,

me, Reader, hath not the least *Energy* upon our Hearts, nor hath wrought any greater *Concern* upon us, than if we had been hearing *Lectures* of *Happiness* in the Kingdom of the *Moon*, and promising hopes of Promotion in *Eutopia*. Yet is God so pleased to see *Abraham* thus Lowly, that taking him when he is Down, He Dubs him a *Knight of the Holy Order*, and adds a Sacred Syllable more to his Name; who from the single Honour of being the *Great Father* of the *Thousands of Israel*, shall be now inaugurated the true *Pope* of the *Universal Church* of God, next and immediately under his own Son. And *Kings* by more *Natural Bonds* than those of *Civility* and *Complement*, shall truly call him *Father*, and be proud too to derive their Royal Descent from the direct Line of his Blood. Thus is *Abraham* placed in a *Chair of State* upon a *Throne*, with all the *Scepters* of the World humbly lying at his Feet. His *Humility* hath gotten him this Honour. *Jecontah's* Wickedness shav'd him into the despicable Cut of plain *Contah* (as one unworthy to fill up the Leaves of the Sacred Records with the full Syllables of his Name :) But *Abraham's* Devotion must swell the *Volume*, and all *Lips* shall be *Taxt* to pay a greater *Tribute of Breath* to his *Title*. 'Tis Critically observed that the *Hebrew Letter* [*He*] that God interposed within *Abraham's* Name, is the Principal of those Holy Letters which make up the *Tetragrammation*, and is twice made use of in the Ineffable Name of God; which was to mind him, that in this Covenant, he did not as formerly, convey away his Blessings only; but now should his *Abraham*

ham communicate of his very *Divinity*. Startle not, *Reader*, 'tis no more than what *St. Peter* investeth the whole *Posterity* and *Church* with, who are *Partakers of the Divine Nature of God*.

Now because the best *Women* are a little *Ambitious*, and God knew how ill *Sarah* would take it, should she not Participate in the same Dignity with her *Lord*, *Abraham* with his own Hand shall deliver the *Patent* for a *Ladiship*, that from the little *Verge* of her own *Court* shall extend it self, and Invest Her with a *Right of Precedency* above all the *Ladies* of the *World*. As the Great *Grandmother* of a Double Race of *Kings*, whose *Sacred Diadems* shall out-glitter all the *Crowns* upon Earth. Let those of her *Order* remember that *Sarah* was a *LADY* of Gods *Immediate Creation*, who though She be now Advanced to far greater *Glory* than that, yet may they not forget the *First* of their *Order*, and ever think it their *Duty* to give her *Place* in their *Hearts*.

To no more purpose do we bear the *Sacred Name* of God our *Saviour* upon us, if the *Holy Nature* of *Jesus* be not found within us, then did the *Jews*, the *Carnal Seed* of the *Spiritual Abraham*, who by vertue of the *Covenant*, were named the *People of God*, and called by his *Name*, by whose dishonourable *Actions* that *Holy Name* of God was *Blasphemed* by the very *Gentiles*, and for which cause they that bore his *Name*, now bear his *Wrath*, and are cut off from all the *Prerogatives* of that *Holy Calling*. Take heed therefore, *Christian*, and Let every one that nameth the *Name* of the *Lord Jesus*, depart from *Iniquity*.

And though the *Privileges* annexed to this
Holy

Holy Name and *Divine Nature*, will not be acknowledged to the Rightful *Heirs* of *Abraham* in this *Forreign World*, where they are as *Princes Incognito* in a strange Country (their King himself being but *This Fellow* in every impious Mouth, and they knew not whence he was) yet hath God given them the High Title of *Sons* and *Daughters* to Himself, (and they shall be so, saith the Lord Almighty :) Nay, a Name better than that, the *Mighty Heirs* of God, and *Joynt-Heirs* with *Christ*, of the everlasting *Kingdom*, where they shall be glorified together with *Him* who is even *Gods Fellow*, and shall wear the *immartessible Crown*; being every one of them *Kings* and *Priests* unto God, they need little envy the swelling *Titles* of *Exalted Ashes*, whose petty Honours will all in a Moment lye in the Dust, and be interr'd with Themselves in the *Dark Vault* of an eternal *Oblivion*, when these are Enrolled in the *Registries* of *Everlastingness*, and their blessed Names written by God himself in the *Book of Life*. And how impossible is it for others that inherit the *Royalries* of *Abraham* and *Sarah*, who Care not to derive them from the Great Fountain of the true and ever-living *Honour*, will not present their *Patents* to Heaven to be *Confirmed* there, but satisfie themselves with the bare *Ecchoing* each others *Titles*, and bandying them from *Lip to Lip*, with such *Ridiculous Circumstances* of *Complement*, as harden them against God himself, and makes all the real Dignities of the great *Abraham*, very despicable in their *Eyes*; which the Blessed *Jesus* perceived well enough when he pronounced the Incapacity of such Men to participate

cipate of the True Honour which cometh from God only, when they satisfie themselves with receiving Honour one from Another. Would God that all the Pagan Princes of the Earth would once remember to Dip their Robes in the Blood of the Immaculate Lamb, and lay down their Crowns at the Sacred Feet of the Holy Jesus, who would keep them no longer than till he had taken Measure by them, how to fit their Royal Heads with Others more transparently Glorious, against the time they shall come to wear them in his own Kingdom! And that all the Inferior Shields of the Earth would Joyn themselves to the People of the God of Abraham, who praise him for ever for all the Glories he hath by this Covenant secured to them in the endless Life.

And what else was the end of God in this Nobilitating Abraham and Sarah, by drawing out their Titles into a more sweet and excellent Euphony, than only to usher in and make way for the future Honours of a nearer Relation to Himself. As Princes ordinarily clap Coronets on the Heads of those celebrated Beauties whom they design to Advance and bring within their Curtains. So here the most high God, in the drawing up the Covenants of Marriage between Himself and these Holy Persons, is not unmindful to include the Article of an Honour proportionable to the Dignity of the Match, and e'er he Solemnize the Nuptials, will affix a Majesty to their Names, which shall drown all the commemoration of their Native Meanness, and mind them of the Royal Endowments they enjoy from the Great Joyn-

fire which Enriches them with an unlimited Dowry both of *Heaven and Earth*.

No wonder then that *Abraham* shrouds his Face with Shame and Blushing, in the humble consciousness of his own *Vileness*; as thinking himself most unworthy the Grace of being thus Promoted to the Glory of a *Conjugal Union* with an *Almighty Jehovah*; and had his *Posterity* been as humble and sensible as himself was of that exceeding *Honour*, they had never so treacherously run *Whoring* from so great an *Husband* after *Stocks and Stones*, when *Himself* was ever so Faithful and Constant to the *Bonds* of his *Covenant*, as it went against his very Heart to write them a *Bill of Divorce*, (*How shall I give thee up Ephraim?*) but was ever sending *Messengers* and *Letters* after them, to invite and perswade them to remember themselves, and him to whom they were so strongly *Allied* and *United*, beseeching them to return again to their *first Husband*: And though this was not the common Custom of Men to receive again those *Wives* that had so often run Away to play the Harlot with other Lovers, yet would *Himself* pardon all, and entertain them again in Love and Peace: For *I am married unto you, saith the Lord, Jer. 3. 1. & 12.* Will you take a View of the *Marriage Covenants*, and observe, That though they be drawn up by God himself, yet to what *Mighty Advantage* they Run on the Part of *Abraham* and his *Heirs* for ever?

First, *I am God*: And whatsoever I am in my Self, that will I be to thee; *I will be a God to thee.*

Secondly, As I am God, *I am Almighty*, and *Alfufficient*, both for my self and all my Creatures that shall close with me ! I will make over the Fulness and Alfufficiency of my *Godhead* to thee. There is nothing in it, (communicable to the Creature) but what shall be secured to, and imployed for Thee and Thine on all occasions.

Thirdly, The very same Priviledge shall be secure to all the *Children of thy Faith* for evermore : *I will be their God*, and I do hereby firmly, and unalterably Covenant with thee to be a God unto Thee and Them. *To do and be* whatsoever a God can do and be to his People in Covenant with him.

Fourthly, I will confirm my part of these Covenants to thee and thy spiritual Seed, by mine Oath which shall never be broken : And they shall be one day further Ensured and Sealed in the Blood of my Son.

Now on the other side, what I require of thee *Abraham*, and all thy Seed that shall enter into this Covenant after thee, is no more than (what every *Woman* engageth to her *Husband*) to be *faithful* and *Loyal*. I will be *wholly* to thee, and thou shalt be *wholly* to me. I am *the Lord thy God*, thou shalt have *no other Gods but me* : This is my Covenant therefore, thou shalt *Walk before me in Uprightness*, with a *Perfect Heart*, and a *willing Mind*. Thine Eye and Heart shall be ever upon me, to admire thine own Happiness in all my *Perfections* : Thou needest not hunt after *Creatures*, with expectation of other *Good* than what is secured to thee

in

in my *Self*: Didst thou know what a Portion thou hast in a God, thou wouldst disdain to turn aside after *Idols*: Thou hast mine *Alfufficiency* made over to thee, out of which, as from an inexhaustible *Fountain*, thou mayst draw out all thy Supplies. *What need they run to Streams that have a Command of the Spring-head?* Let thy Children be but Faithful and Constant to me, and give themselves up by an adequate measure of Trust and Confidence in my *Truth* and *Covenant*, relying wholly on my Wisdom and Goodness in providing for them, and *casting all their cares upon Me*, they shall ever reap the sweet Effects of that *Recumbency*, while they give me the Glory of their Faith: *I will never leave them, I will never forsake them,* [*וְאֵלֹהִים עִמָּנוּ*,] *I will not, no, by no means I will not*: While they keep up entire Affections towards me, *I will delight to do them good, with all my Heart, and with all my Soul*: But if they run *Whoring* from me, (for I am a *Jealous God*) I shall soon discover the least Aberration of their unfaithful Hearts, and have Wayes enough (tho' Sharp and Thorny) to *Hedge* up their wandring Steps, and reduce them again to their *First Husband*: But Integrity of Soul will be their greatest Glory, and the higher their Affections shall arise by perfect Dependance upon me, the more sweetly will all the streams of my Love and Goodness flow out upon them: I will fill their Souls with *Joy and Peace in Believing*: They shall taste *Angels food*, and feast themselves with the *Bread of Heaven*: The very Marrow and Fat-

ness of my Bounty shall be their daily Repast: They shall not envy the Prosperities of the Wicked, that are seeding themselves to an Eternal Slaughter: When the ravishing sence of my Love alone shining in upon them, shall furnish out all Varieties of ineffable Pleasures to them, they shall pity those that are walking in the *Shadows of Death*, and See with none other but Brutish Eyes, when the *Beams* of my Presence shall Gild all the Chambers of their Souls, and make a continual *Goshen* there: When the World shall reproach and reject them, because of their Fidelity to my *Covenant*, and they complain how much they suffer for me; I will extend the Arms of my tender Mercies to receive them into mine own Embraces and safety. And should some of them (as my Witnesses) be delivered up to the Malice of their Enemies, and they Mercilessly kill them *all the day long, and lead them as Sheep to the slaughter*; yet shall Death be so far from separating them from my Love, that themselves shall be *more than Conquerours over all*; while all the surviving of them may prepare their Eyes to see the *Vengeance*, and their feet to be washed in the *Blood of their Enemies*. Is not this laid up with me, and sealed among my *Treasures*? *Treasures of Wrath* which shortly shall be poured on them, and fall down in whole *Cataclismes* of Judgment on their Guilty Heads and Souls, who have *eaten up my People as Bread*.

The dread of Death must not tempt them to recede one *Inch* from their Sincerity, since they have a God who is a Fountain of Life; and

and that little little of it they breath out in the World, is not a Drop compared to the *River of Life* they shall *Swim* in to Eternity: But that little (how little soever it be) when Offered to my Glory, is so pleasing a *Sacrifice*, as cannot fail to draw from mine *Exchequer* the singular *Retributions* of my Favour, on those happy Souls, who so valorously surrender up their All to my Truth and Honour, in assured Confidence of an happier *Being* in my Self. 'Tis the Triumph of my Justice to render unto every Man according to his Work: As to their Executioners the hotter *Fires* of my Wrath, and double Portions of my *Plagues*, so more resplendant *Crowns* for the Loyal *Heads* of those who failed not to write the Evidences of their *Integrity* and *Love* in the dearest Blood of their *Hearts*. How precious then in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints! Whose Souls are so securely bound up in the Bundle of Life with the Lord their God, that all their Enemies on Earth, that all the Devils in Hell cannot slacken the Knots of that Union, by which they are fastened to Himself. Life is Theirs, to fit them for, and Death is Theirs to bring them to his Glory, and blessed Fruition of his Endless Love. And in nothing could God have manifested a greater Love to his Abraham, than by prescribing a Duty so perfectly agreeable to his own Holy Nature, which is Pure, Simple and Unmixt. He is what He is, and cannot be any thing else than what he discovers Himself to be, the only True and Faithful God, keeping Covenant and Mercy with them that love

love him and keep his Commands: And 'tis Sincerity alone, Truth in the inward Parts, the Service of a real and perfect Heart that he requires: He hath shewed thee, O Man! what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee more, than to do justly, (as Himself will) to love mercy, (as Himself doth) and to walk humbly before him? To be holy as he is holy, perfect as he is perfect; looking towards Him with the single Eye of Fidelity and Love, and directing all thy Devotions to him with Delight and Joy: Is he not thy Father, whom else shouldst thou Reverence and Love? Is he not thy God in Covenant with thee, whom else shouldst thou rejoyce and delight in? No true Son of Abraham, who knows how Zecharies Soul was ravished, when God after more than two Thousand years performed the mercy promised; and in remembrance of his holy Covenant, which he swore to our Forefather Abraham, sent his Great Heir into the World to confirm and seal it with his Blood; will think it remote from the Story of Abraham's Life, if I stop a little, and spend a Page or two in the opening the Bowels of this Mercy, wherein his own Salvation is so nearly concerned, (and which have swell'd up the Volumes of so many of our Excellent Authors.) If the same Covenant were all the Desire and all the Salvation of the Princely David, (with whom it was also renewed) the Comfort whereof was the Joy and Rejoycing of his Heart, methinks it might be some Refreshment here to every Heir of the same Promise.

A Brief Account of the Covenant of Grace.

K Now then, that by this Promise, *I will be a God unto thee* ; Each Person of the Holy Trinity is made over to them, to work personally and distinctly for them : And true Believers have a real Propriety in each Person of the Blessed Godhead. *I will be thy God*, saith the Father here : And *I will give my Son to them*, [*Unto us a Son is given*] and *I will pour out my Spirit upon them*. Not a Communicable Attribute of God, but what is made over, and put by this Covenant into the possession of the Sons of Abraham to live on : Therefore David claims the *Strength of God* as his own, and the *Mercy of God* as his own : *Thou art the God of my Strength, and the God of my Mercy*. That *Power and Mercy* which thou hast secured to me for my Hope and Comfort, to make use of in all Extremities, and against all Infirmities ; and the whole Church claims the Benefit and Honour of their Relation to God from no other Right. Doubtless thou art our Father. And *I will be a Father unto them*, to act as a Father for them. So not any *Merit or Grace* in *Jesus the Son*, but what is as certainly secured ; whatsoever he *was, or did, or suffered*, was all for their sake. The Fruit and Benefit of all most certainly accrewable to Them. All the Operations of the *Holy Spirit*, sure and certain to the *Heirs of this Promise* : They shall infallibly be convinced of *Sin*, Converted to *God*, established in *Grace*, comforted in *Affliction*,
and

and prepared for *Salvation*. All the Decrees of Heaven run in their Favour, and all Providences co-operate for their Eternal Good.

Jesus Himself is the Head of the Covenant, the first Federate, the Corner-stone on whom is built the whole *Fabrick*, the Contrivance whereof thõ secret and mysterious, transacted by Covenant between the *Father* and *Himself*: Yet we find *Eternal Life* secured by Promise to every Believer before the foundation of the World, on condition of such performances that Christ in fulness of Time should appear in the World to perfect and accomplish: And some of these Articles of the Covenant of Redemption, are expressly apparent to any that carefully observe them in *Isaiah* 49. *Jesus* therefore is the first *Elect*, but we *Elected* in him: He the first *Called*, and we *Called* by him. In Him is all fulness dwelling, from which we receive Grace for Grace. He Commissionated, sealed and sent, with the Offices of *Prophet*, *Priest*, and *King*: Other *Prophets* Commissioned under him, are sent to perswade and draw us into the Bonds of the Covenant; these speak to the Ear, but He is the *True Prophet*, that effectually worketh by speaking to the Heart. Him shall ye hear: I will allure her, I will speak to her Heart, when I speak. See Margin *Hosea* 2. 14. He draws us as he did *Abraham* by *Illumination*, and giving us New Eyes to see God in the Beauty of his Holiness, and the exceeding Riches of his Grace; Sin in its Sinfulness, Deformity, Filthiness, and execrable Effects; Duty in the Reasonableness, Good, and Profitableness of it; Our selves, as perfectly undone by Nature, and further destroyed

stroyed by Sin: All *Creatures* in their insufficiency, and weakness to do us any good: *All our Righteousness as filthy Rags*, and nothing: *Himself as the only Refuge of Hope, and Salvation* to be no where had but in him: He our only *Priest*, sacrificing his own *Body* upon the *Tree*, and pouring out his own *Blood* to expiate Sin, which the blood of *Sacrifices* could never take away, but by this *Offering Blotted out*, removed to the distance of the *East from the West*, buried in the depths of the *Sea*; Sought for but not found, forgotten and remembered no more, freely and for ever pardoned; and the *Hand-writing* that was against us *Cancell'd*, and nothing laid to our charge. 'Tis he makes an end of *Sin*, and brings in *Everlasting Righteousness*, by which we are justified from all things, and perfectly reconciled to God: He is our *Peace*, and since his Return to Heaven, becomes our *Advocate* there, to plead the Merits of his own *Righteousness* for the Justification and Acquittal of all the thankful Heirs of *Abraham*: God hears Him always: His *Blood* speaks for us, and on that Account God is but just in forgiving our Sins, himself having paid the *Ransom*, and becoming the great *Propitiation*. 'Tis from the prevalency of his *Intercession*, that he is so Able to save all that come to him. Such an *High-Priest* became us, our Case desperate without Him: No satisfaction for the least sin possibly to be made by our selves. *Ten thousand Rivers of Oyl, and the offering up the fruit of our Bodies for the sin of our Souls*, too mean a *Sacrifice*, and to no purpose at all. *Redemption cost*
more

more than so, and Man must let it alone for ever. The poor carnal Sons of Abraham, going about to establish their own Righteousness, could not make it stand, they too soon found It had no feet to subsist on. The Galatians seeking to compound the Matter by an unnatural mixture of their own with Christs, were (by that attempt) in the Account of the Holy Ghost but Fools and Bewitched. He alone the Lord our Righteousness.

Object. But how shall we be brought into it?

Ans. He is therefore a Great King, a Spiritual King, a King over Hearts; he hath Arguments to perswade us to lay down our Necks to his easie Yoke, and to bear his lighter Burthen: For he is a gentle Prince, and his Laws are not Grievous or unsufferable; his Service is perfect Freedom. There is nothing difficult to a willing Mind and a ready Heart, which himself is able to give; *I will give them a new Heart, and a new Spirit will I put within them*; this (and my own Spirit which also I will put in them) shall cause them to walk in my Statutes and to keep my Judgments and do them, Ezek. 30. 26. His Throne is within, and all the Exercises of his holy Government transacted in the Court of Conscience, where Himself sitteth Judge, (or the blessed Spirit his Vicar) over every Thought of the Heart and Action of the Life. Not a vain Imagination but is brought down and humbled; not an idle thought but what is captivated to the obedience of Christ. 'Tis he that strikes the stony Rock, and the Waters gush out; such a Rock was Peter, whom he smote but with a glance of his Eye, the Sun dissolving the Ice, melted

ed him all into Water; *He went out and wept bitterly.* He sheddeth his Love into the Soul, and cold *Mary* is all in a *Flame*. He pours in his *Spirit* of Joy, and *Paul* and *Silas* sing in the Stocks. He opens the *Prison doors*, and the Shackles of Sin, and Death flie off from the whole World, lying in *spiritual Captivity*. He *Propheesies* over the *dry Bones*, and they come together, take Life, rise up and follow him, as well thro' all Tribulations, Sorrows, Sufferings from Men, Temptations, Buffetings, Persecutions raised by the Devil, Fears, Disquietments, Dejections of their own Hearts, Infirmities, Weaknesses, and Imperfections of their Duties; As Comforts, Encouragements, Spiritual strength, present Sence of his Love, and secret Testimonies of his Spirit, which is ever present with them, to Illuminate, Strengthen, Comfort, Establish and Direct them; and therefore *whosoever hath not the Spirit of Christ, is none of His*. This holy King rules not immediately only by his blessed *Vicar* above, but mediately also by his Subordinate *Officers* here below: Whether (1.) *Civil*, whom His *Subjects* Obey, for *his Sake* and for *Conscience Sake*, from a right Principle, (and not Brutishly,) in all their Lawful Impositions agreeable to his Glory; they are ever Praying and Praising God for them, yea tho' they be Persecuted by some of them. Or (2.) *Ecclesiastick*, whom they Receive, Honour, Love and Obey as his *Ambassadors*, and such as are *sent by Him*, to break to them the *Bread of Life*, whom they therefore follow, and yield themselves up to their Lord, by a gracious Conformity to the holy Doctrine brought them

them by his Ministers, and Adorning that Doctrine by a suitable conversation in all things; *Abounding in every good word and work*, and approving themselves the faithful Servants of God, in all the duties of both Tables, having an equal *Respect to all the Commandments of their Lord*; and approving themselves to *Men* by every Act of *moral Righteousness* and *Duty*: They shall be at the last day approved by him, to be no *Hypocrites*, vain Pretenders, proud and empty Professors, self-seeking Designers, or troublesome dividers of his Church and People; but the True, Heartly, Sincere, Rooted, Living and Fruitful Members of his *Mystical Body*, passing here the *time of their Sojourning* in filial fear and love, and persevering in all Fidelity and Constancy of Obedience to all the revealed Laws of their great King, as their Fore-father *Abraham* did; they at last receive *the end of their Faith*, and everlasting Salvation in Heaven, where with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, and all the Heirs of their Covenant, they are blessed and happy, in and with God, and the Lord Jesus for evermore.

Come Reader, hast thou no Heart to accompany the blessed *Communion of Saints* to this glorious Home? Why dost thou then bear about thee the *Seal of the same Covenant*, and art *Crossed* for the Holy Land, and hast received the sacred Name of Christ upon thee, and thou pretendest to be a *Candidate* for Heaven, and wilt rage against any that will dare to sweep away the *Cobwebs* of thine Hopes; when alas, it hangs by a slender Thread, and the lightest hand breaks every *Cord* of it away, and down it falls, and thy self

self with it into utter despair and Ruine. See
 whether thine Anchor have better hold than
 theirs, whose Dooms the great Heir himself pro-
 nounced. *The Children of the Kingdom shall be cast
 out, Matt. 8. 12.* So little will it avail thee to
 walk for a while (alas! for a Moment) on the
 Borders of the blessed Land, if thine own Infi-
 delity and thy treacherous Heart shut thee out at
 last. Either Rend off the *Title*, and wipe away
 the drops of that *holy Water* (issuing from the
 Wounds of the Crucified Saviour) wherewith
 thou wert once Baptized into that sacred Name,
 and renounce the hopes of that glorious Profes-
 sion; Or else be Faithful to thine *Articles*; and
 give thy self wholly to him who hath given him-
 self to thee. Nothing less than the Hearty de-
 votion of thy whole Soul and Life unto God;
 can baer any reasonable *Proportion* with his Royal
 Bounty, or give any convincing Demonstration
 of thy Real *Gratitude*; less than this God will
 not *Take*, less than this thou canst not *offer*.
 Every *Imperfection*, and falling short of this must
 be lamented with bitter *Tears*, wherein the poor
 Heart *swims* back again to better Duty and stricter
 Watchfulness, and the broken Bones are jointed
 in to greater strength and Establishment, made
 fit to walk with a more direct and even Progress
 in the *holy Path*, rejoycing in their own Integrity.
 But if instead of this, thou be found wandering in
 the Wilderness of Error and *Vanity*, walking
 after the *imagination of thine evil Heart*, accord-
 ing to the course of the ungodly World, and
 not after God; know that thy Covenant is Sealed
 with melting *Wax*, and thou thy self art holding

it to the *Flame*, in the light whereof thou mayst read thy *despairs*, and find thy self in no better condition than those Sons of *Abraham* whose Unbelief and Obduration hath cancel'd the whole Effects of it, and walking up and down in the Earth as the Deplorable Monuments of divine Indignation, with Antipathies as great as ever against the blessed Person and Doctrine of the mighty Redeemer. Thou maist indeed (as some of them) have a goodly *Portion* and *Heritage* here below, Consolations suitable to thine own poor carnal Heart, (and God will not break the first Articles of a plentiful *Canaan* in the World, *thy Belly shall be filled with hidden Treasures* :) But remember then that thy *Tenure* is but for Life, and an uncertain Lease which may expire, e're to Morrow comes, and the Morning Sun may find thee a *Carkase*; the Fearful case of him in the Gospel, who went to Bed well, but awaked in Hell. God hath reserved no second Portion in the next World, but that of Fire and Brimstone. *The Heavens shall reveal thine Iniquity, and the Earth shall rise up against thee, the Increase of thine House shall depart, and thy Goods shall flow away in the day of his Wrath: There is the portion of a wicked Man from God, and the Heritage appointed him by God.* Away vain Man to thy Closet with *David*, and consider the deplorable condition of These: Make hast to the Sanctuary, and there *understand their latter end*. It may be when thou seest the Slipperiness of their Steps, and how soon they are brought to a fearful end, thou wilt pour out at least a sigh for a better *Portion*, and to enjoy a more lasting Inheritance in God. Remember

me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy People; O visit me with thy Salvation, that I may see the good of thy Chosen, that I may joyce in the gladness of thy Nation, that I may glory with thy Inheritance. A very Sorcerer can breath out his Groans for this Mercy, that He might die the Death of the Righteous, and his last end be like his. 'Tis a fearful Stupidity that terminates all thy desires in the Creature, and layes thee as one Dead in the Grave of Insensibility, without natural affection to thine own Soul, or the least Devotion for *Abraham's* God.

God having drawn the fair Indentures containing the Covenants between Himself on one part, and *Abraham* and his faithful Children on the Other, will now have them Confirmed by such irrefragable Obligations as shall make them sure and unalterable for ever. They shall be first Sealed in the Blood of *Abraham*, and hereafter in the Blood of his Great Heir; and himself will establish them with a Solemn Oath, which you find *Gen. 22. 16.* And every one of *Abraham's* Posterity and Family, shall under pain of Death come in and Seal for himself, entring into a Sacrament, to be True and Faithful to the Articles of the holy League. They with their great Father, must wear the remembrance of so vast a Priviledge, not on their Hearts only, but their *Flesh* too. *Abraham* consenting to this Covenant, and giving up himself unto God (who had now given himself unto *Abraham*;) must evidence that Consent and yield up Possession, by suffering a Part of Himself to be cut off, as a little Turfe taken off from the Field to give Livery and Seizin of the whole

to the Owner: And by this he shall be known and distinguished to be *holy Land*, separated from all the huge *Common of the Earth*, to be a peculiar *Inclosure* unto God: All the World besides *Profane*, and left as *wild Beasts* to Graze on the Mountains, while himself and his Family is mark'd up as a *little flock*, for God himself to feed and take care of. His *Posterity* grew so proud of this *Priviledge*, that they little valued the Princes of the World that bore not this Impression upon them. The *Seckemirish* Prince must submit to *Circumcision* e're ever he Bed a Daughter of *Abraham*. And *David* knew no reason why his little Body that was fortified with the Divine *Signature*, might not Buckle with an Uncircumcised *Philistine* tho' never so Strong. They grew so High, that at last they thought themselves secure against God Himself, and hop'd to baffle his very *Justice*. While they had *Abraham* to their *Farther*, the Baptist had enough to do to beat them off from so vain a confidence, and to convince them how little it availed them to glory in *Immunities* when they were false and unfaithful to them. 'Twas Death to them to hear that *sinners of the Gentiles* should be admitted to the priviledges themselves enjoyed and despised; But their Great *Father* (who mistook not the conditions of the *Covenant*, and kept close to them) was transported with the Reasonableness of all the *Articles* on his own part, and the Glory of those on Gods, with a brave Readiness of Mind that always corresponded with every *Dictate* of the Divine Will, prepares himself to *Bleed*, and little felt the *smart* in the *Flesh* that signalized

signalized to him the infinite *Mercies* of God to his *Soul*. Not only his *Spirit* but his very *Flesh* is willing, and is glad that at that Age he had any *Blood* to shed at the Command of God: He demurrs not in the least, nor will sleep e're he yields the Fruits of a cheerful Compliance. *There is no such sincere Obedience as the present.* 'Tis dangerous to consult Carnal Reason, or call *Flesh and Blood* to Council, where its own Interests are like to be curtail'd. While the *Impetus* of Love and Zeal is upon him, will *Abraham* sacrifice himself, and yield his *Flesh* to a *Sacrament* that shall sign and seal to him security from all the dangers of its Lusts, and assure him that all the Powers of Sin were perfectly baffled in that *Obedience*; and should be as truly mortified as that *Dead Skin* cut off from his Body, and cast away.

The Great Man that had so full an Interest in the *Affections* of his Family, was not at a Loss for Arguments to prevail with them to act a Duty so exceedingly profitable to themselves, which he expounded to them in the several parts of its *Excellency*, and further recommended by his alluring *Example*. *In vain do we impose on others a burthen we shrink from our selves.* He exacts not any more from them, than what himself and his little *Ishmael* should do before them: He was not to dwell in *Abraham's House* who would not close with him in all the parts of his *Worship*. They had poured the *Blood* of many a *Beast* together in Sacrifice, now they must bleed together *themselves* in their own Persons. 'Twas but a superfluity they offered a

a *Free-Will Offering* to God, representing to him the *Devotion* of all unto his Service. It were well if we could cut off our *Superfluities* too, that are so like to undo us: *Circumcision* is in fashion and a Mercy still, when by God himself effectually made upon the *Heart*.

Of how vast a Consequence is the Piety of *Princes*, whose Actions, either *Good* or *Evil*, draw the whole *Universe* with them, to attend them in the next World! By the *Example* of their *Goodness* Men flock in whole shoals to the Service of God, and by their *Prophaneness* they flye as fast from it. Hapyy was the least *Skullion* in the Family of *Abraham*, who partaking of the Ordinances of the true *Church*, excelled all the *Pagan* Princes of the Earth, that were *Strangers* from the *Covenant of Promise*, having no hope, and without God in the World: So much better is it to be a *Door-keeper* in the house of the Lord, than to live and reign in the *Tents of Wickedness*: Let us therefore again take up *David's* Petition, Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy People; O visit me with thy salvation, for I have none in Heaven but thee, and there is nothing in Earth that I desire in comparison of thee.

The *Flesh* is too traiterous a Friend to carry on long the Interests of the *Soul*. The *Circumcision* made with hands on the Body, profited as little as the Engravement afterwards on the *Tables of stone*: God is forced to carry it deeper, and to make a more effectual *Incision* upon the *Inward Parts* e're ever the true *Circumcision* is effected. Our selves see that all the wash-

ing

ing of the *Flesh* prevails not to wrince away the Filth of the *Spirit*, 'till himself comes to *Baptize with the Holy Ghost and with Fire*, and makes the very *Conscience* to answer readily to all the Will of God. The Holy Word evaporates into Air, and hath no place in us, 'till the *Essential Word* makes the *penetration*, and gives it a Lodging in the Soul. And though inconsiderate Men little think it, they do but swallow their own *Damnation*, 'till their Eyes discern the *Lord's Body* in his own light; those that have *Eat and Drunk in his Presence* shall be turned off at the last Day with a doleful *Discedite, Depart from me for I know you not*. Prayer it self unless *selvidg'd* by *Resolution* ravel's out into nothing; so little trust is there to the best of external *Priviledges*, where they are not accompanied with the *Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power*. He is not a Jew which is one outwardly: *Circumcision is that of the Heart in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of Men but God*.

Though the Ordinances in themselves are ineffectual without God, yet being of Divine Institution, they bind us to a constant and faithful waiting upon him in the Use of them, for who knows when or how soon he may work by them? The pretence of their invalidity give us no License to depart from them, or to lay them by; since here we see utter *Excision* menaced against every Child of *Abraham* that should not bleed by the *Circumcising Knife*. There are some benefits which the most wicked Men enjoy together with the Holy in the outward Communion of the *Church*, for which they shall pay their

Homage, and yield a subjection (such as it is, though hypocritical and involuntary) they shall sit before him as his People do, and make some shews at least of a real Conformity and Union with Him, though their *Hearts run after Covetousness*, and they are as Traiterous as Judas, who yet had his *Sop dipt in the same Dish with Jesus*.

God who had hitherto feasted his *Abraham* with a *Banquet* of Promises, (which only his Faith is to feed on all his Life long, and must depart the World in Assurance of their Truth when his Eyes should be shut up in Death;) will yet present him with one *Dish* which himself shall see, and all his Senses ravished with the very taste of. *Sweet Meats are kept for the last Course*, and help to digest all the rest the better. Judge Reader, with what Ears *Abraham* receives the Tydings of an *Heir* from the Body of his dearest *Sarah*, who at once is made a *Lady* and a *Lady Mother*: She shall have a *Son* that shall own and double that Honour together. 'Tis Astonishing News, and *Abraham's* Feet can hold him no longer, he embraces the Mercy of a *Saviour* and a *Son* with a lowly Prostration: *Blessings multiply upon him as Duties are multiplied by him*. No Man shall ever lose by a munificent God. *Adam* parts with a *Rib* and behold a *Wife*; *Abraham* with a superfluous *Skin*, and behold a *Son*. The Heart of Man cannot bear the Kisses of Divine Love without dissolving into Joy, and *Abraham's* Soul is so full of it now, that it forces a vent at his *Mouth*: He laughs out the excess of that Comfort which seems so pleasingly to oppress him. And God himself is so delighted to see his

Abraham

Abraham thus humbly and innocently Merry at the Thoughts of *Sarah's* Breeding, that while the *Name* of *Isaak* liveth, it shall never be forgotten that *Abraham* laughed thus reverently in Faith; and as sometimes one who finds that he hath gratified his Company by telling a Story, which hath proved so acceptable and affecting beyond expectation, will repeat it again, in Assurance of that Virtue in the repetition that will still keep up the Humour; so God disdains not to make a Rehearsal of what he saw sounded so sweetly in the Ears of his dearest Friend; *Sarah thy Wife shall bear thee a Son: Indeed she shall, v. 19.* Thothine Age of an *Hundred*, and hers of *Ninety* Years may make it seem impossible to Nature, yet I have revealed to thee mine *Almighty* Power, to give it an Evidence in this Grace. God is already teaching *Abraham* the exercise of his Faith in his *Alfufficiency*; and he is no dull Scholar, but presently takes out the Lesson, and is dandling *Isaak* in the Arms of his Faith, before he is Conceived in the Womb of his Mother.

Could we Believe with *Abraham's* Faith, we should Rejoyce with *Abraham's* Joy. There is no true Pleasure but what is Spiritual, all the Worlds *Huzzah's* but as the Noise of *Thorns*, which Crackle themselves into Nothing. *Solomon* commits the Vanity to *Bedlam*, the proper place for the *Franticks*, that distractedly Laugh while they are little sensible what Tears they shall Weep in Hell, *Eccl. 2. 2.*

*Canst thou be Merry, Canst thou Play,
Silly Soul, who Sim'd to Day?*

In

In *Heaven*, where there is no *Sin*, there is Fullness of *Joy*: In *Hell* where there is nothing but *Sin*, there is nothing but *Sorrow*; but on *Earth* Men *Sin*, and rejoyce in it too, yet feel no *Sorrow*, and no wonder when they feel no *Sin*, as the Distemper'd are sensible of no *Madness*. These are pack'd away by *Abraham's* Great Heir, into their own *Place*, to see if they can be as *Folly* there too; *Woe unto you*, &c. The Merry Frolick of a *short* day, dying into an *Everlasting* Night of Horror and Torment.

But for a greater Increase of *Abraham's* Joy, he receives not the News of a *Son* only, but an *Heir of the Covenant*; He shall inherit the Blessings of *Grace and Glory*. God intends *Isaac* for *Heaven* e'er ever he had *Life* or *Conception*. Where are those that quarrel at the comfortable Doctrine of *Election*, which God himself Preaches to *Abraham*? Well might he *Laugh* again, for so good a *Son* maketh a glad *Father*: 'Tis well when *Parents* and *Children* go not two ways in the dreadful Day. *Isaac* is sure of a place in his Fathers *Bosom*, in the everlasting Kingdom. When the Seed of *Free Grace* is Sown into a good Field, it never fails of a *Crop*; but where it falls in *Barren Ground*, expect nothing but *Weeds*. Too many want the Ingenuity to make Grateful Returns for Spiritual Mercies. Men are not only *Evil* because God is *Good*, but that very Goodness makes them *Worse*; they tire his *Patience*, and adventure to make trial to what length the Dimensions of his *Long-suffering* may be extended. But the brave *Abraham*, under the fore-knowledge of Gods *Decree*, is so far from
 slackening

slackening his Duty in the careful Education of *Isaac* into Piety; that looking on him as an *Heir of Heaven*, he was ever dressing him up in such *Robes* as he knew would be worn, and could be never out of Fashion there: He endeavours to make him a greater *Proficient* (if possible) than himself. And methinks *Isaac's* whole Life was nothing else but a lively *Comment* on the distinguishing *Mercy* of God towards him.

True Grace hath that excellent Property to enlarge the Heart into an Universal Concern for General Good, and wisheth *Epidemical* Happinesses to all. Some quarrel at that charitable Supplication of the Church in the *Litany*, *That it might please thee to have Mercy upon all Men*; Never remembering that God would have *All Men to be saved*, and hath Sworn, That he hath no pleasure in the death of a Sinner, but rather that they turn themselves and Live: If they will not, yet shall they not want the Sacred and Heartly Prayers of the Church that they might. Neither can God take it ill of any that wisheth no more than himself doth; nor doth Man know what *Individual* Person shall miscarry. *Abraham* had the Grace of a Publick Spirit, who doing what he could to further the Happiness of each *Servant* in his Family, could not be without working of Heart for any *Child* of his Bowels. And no wonder then that hearing of all the Mercies of the *Covenant* transferred to *Isaac*, he seems to entertain some Jealous Apprehensions of the future Estate of *Ishmael*, and falls on his Knees to intreat, that the whole Shower of Divine Grace might not so fall on the *One*, but that some

some sprinklings of his Favour may Sanctifie the *Other* also. God forbid that any thing descending from the Body of *Abraham* should fall short, or miscarry of the *Great Salvation*. Therefore intending to give a *Charge* upon Heaven, he sharpens the *Point* of his *Arrow* with an acute Passion, that it might with deeper Penetration enter the Heart of God, and bring back thence a Blessing upon his *Child*: *O that Ishmael might live before thee!* *O that he may!* Prayers shot from our own, seldom miss the Bosom of God, when those that are sent at Random lose their way and act no Execution. He desires not that God would break the Links of that Golden Chain, to which his Decrees have fastened the Salvation of all; or that *Ishmael* might be dispens'd with from the Duties of the *Covenant*, to which his Mercies are annexed: But *O that Ishmael might live before thee!* be indued with those holy Principles of *Grace* and *Spiritual Life*, which might enliven all his *Affections*, and Consecrate all his *Actions* to his Glory, and might be such a one as himself, sincere and upright before him, through all the whole course of his *Pilgrimage* in the World. 'Twere Rudeness indeed, to impose upon God for Salvation to such a one that should make no Care or Conscience of *living before him*. But *O that Ishmael* may Glorifie thee here! 'Tis Holiness that *Abraham* begs for his Son (he knows that God would not pass out of his usual Road to save him in an extraordinary manner.) And what less could a *Father* do, that was so well acquainted with the Happiness attendant on the Faithful Discharge of every Duty and Service to God?

God? Eyes that pierce into the Glories of *Eternity*, and know they are attainable by *Prayer*, quickly get the content of the *Knees* to bend for them, while the Heart enflamed with all the Ardencies of Passion and Zeal, makes its Pursuits after them. *He knows not what Salvation means, that makes but slow and heavy Motions towards it; Cold and indifferent Petitions, teach but God to deny them.* We are but in *Jest* for Heaven, till God give us Eyes to see and know how great the *Hope of his Calling is*, and how unsearchable the *Riches of the Glorious Inheritance of the Saints are*: When the Light Shone from Heaven upon *Paul*, then *Behold he prayeth*; he had made many a *Pharisaical Prayer* to little purpose, but now he prayeth *Indeed*. Those are the best *Intercessors* at the Throne of Grace for others, that have prevailed there already for Themselves. *The Parent that hath prayed down Mercy upon his own Soul, is most likely to speed for his Child.* *Abraham* had so often made his *Attacks* upon Heaven, that he knew how to Sling the Stone of his Devotions to an *Hand-breadth*, that it could not miss. And indeed God had set himself as his *Mark*, and given him to fair an Advantage against him, that it was impossible for him not to *Hit*. *I will be a God unto thee*, to do all that a God can do for thee, was such a *Broadside* as might well secure him from Despair of *Execution*. *Abraham* pleads the *Articles* already, and it being the first Claim since the *Sealing of them*, he left it to God himself to consider how little Honour it would be to him to deny it. And *Abraham* doth but humbly plead for what God had granted him already,

and

and his Faith might reverently draw out from him. So amazing is the Priviledge of the Covenant, that God seems to own, that he hath left himself without Power to with-hold from any Heir the reasonable Requests of his Soul. Concerning the work of mine hands, command ye me. So Omnipotent a Grace is humble Prayer: While they are yet speaking, I will answer. See Abraham, thy Petition comes flying back already with Gods Fiat upon it. As for Ishmael I have heard thee, behold I have blessed him. He is thine by Nature, and shall be mine by Grace; He shall become a Nation, and the Great Father of Twelve Princes, (but these degenerate, and all of them together not comparable to One of the Kings Issuing from Isaac's Loyns.) How sweet and obliging is the present return of our Prayers! Abraham is the Type of the Great Intercessor. He sees the Travel of his Soul and is satisfied; The fervent Prayer of this Righteous Man is effectual and prevailing. Hence our Divines conclude the Salvation of Ishmael, (as Lyra, &c.) though his Posterity were cut off from partaking of the Fatness of the Root and true Olive, and grew naturally Wild and too Sowre for Heaven; but for Ishmael himself I have heard thee. What Faithful Son of Abraham bears not his Fathers Heart, yearning after the same Blessing for the Children of his own Bowels, and can the Mother forget her sucking Child, that she should not travel again in a second Birth, until Christ be formed in him? Monica's Prayers and Tears brought forth an happy Son to her self, and Glorious Father to the Church. We are not more bound to Feed and

and Cloath, than to Intercede for them. To little purpose do Men Sweat and Labour to provide and hoard up Estates for them, while they are unconcerned in the *One thing needful*, the better part which shall never be taken from them. Abraham knew what a Rich Portion an All-sufficient God was, without whose Favour the whole World could not make up an Happiness to his *Ishmael*. Blessed are those Children, whose Fathers have *Abraham's* Spirit and Interest in God, and miserable are those *Children* who are not dutiful to such Parents, and thankful for that Interest.

Behold a Felicity Great as this Life is capable of! A *Favourite* of Heaven dress'd up into all the Perfections of *Blessedness*, by the infinite Bounty of God: The Treasures of Providence flowing in upon him in streams of Riches and Wealth: Those attended by Honour and Greatness, and all crowned with a Gracious Heart to improve them. His Soul brim full of Spiritual Comfort, not a Fear or Doubt that clouds the Serenity of his Thoughts, ravished with the sweet Sense of Divine Love, and Assurance of endless Happiness, as secure as the *Word* and *Oath* of a God can make it. Blessed with One *Son* already growing up to be a great *Nation* and Father of Princes, and with Another to come, who shall be *Greater* than he; A *Father of Kings*, and the mighty *Heir* of the everlasting *Covenant*: Not a *Servant* but who is graced with the Priviledges of Divine Favour, and bearing the *Impress* of Gods Love and Kindness upon him. Come all ye Princes of the Earth, Light up all the Tapers of your Earth-ly

ly Glory, Shine forth in the brightest Beams of your *Splendor*, display all the Ensigns of your *Royalty*, Muster up all the Armies of your Power and Force, Repeat all your swelling Titles of Majesty and Dominion, Boast the whole *Exchange* of your Pleasures and Delights: How infinitely short will ye come of this one Blessed Friend of God! *Yours* only a very Gleam and Shadow of *Happiness*, *His* a true, real and substantial one; *Yours* a Glory embittered with Cares, interrupted with Tears, Tainted with Lusts, Laden with Guilts, Subjected to Loss and Dangers, ending in Misery and Death: While *His* is a Crown without Thorns, Laughing at Fears, Unpolluted with Filth, Impossible to be Forfeited, growing up into a Celestial Glory, and shining as long as God himself in the brightness of *Eternity*.

C H A P. VIII.

Abraham entertains the Angels that bring him and his Lady the News of Isaac's Nativity. His Intercession for the five Cities, &c.

FULL *Twenty and five* years had *Isaac* lain in the Womb of the Divine Promise, since first a Seed was secured unto *Abraham*. He must be a *Miraculous* Son whose Parents had not all this while been *Dead* enough to make way for the Power of God to appear in his *Birth*. When all subordinate means become wholly defective and despe-
rate,

rate, then is the proper season for Omnipotency to work. Through all this Series of Years, had Abraham humbly waited in Faith and Patience, upon the God that could not deceive him; and behold now his dim Eyes shall see the *Desire of his Soul*. Thou maist not tarry half so long for an *Heaven, Reader*, as Abraham did for a Son, e'er thine Eyes behold the *Salvation of God*; do but Exercise the same Grace with the same Confidence (for *faithful is he that hath promised*) and verily *thine expectation shall not fail*. Some thousands of Years did the Seed of Abraham and Isaac wait for the Accomplishment of the greater Promise of that *Heir*, who at his coming should Bless all the World, when in the very *Gray Hairs* of Time, and upon the *Death-Bed* of their expiring Hopes, God performed his promised Mercy to the Spiritual House of *Israel*. The carnal Family was grown by that time so faint and short-sighted, that when he came and made his Appearance to them, they could not *discern*, but fell a questioning whether he were the very true Heir or no: They could not believe it to be Him, they had *no Eyes* to behold his Glory; and besides, they were Jealous of his *Voice*. Nor was he *Gay* enough to answer the Ends they expected from him. The *Roman Yoke* had gall'd their Necks, and he seem'd to be no great *Deliverer*, they had no Work to do for a Spiritual Prince, nor lik'd they his Discourses of an *Invisible Kingdom*, they loved This too well to follow him beyond their present Interests, which he appeared not much to Favour, and therefore unanimously Vote him an *Impostor*, closing in

with their own *Tyrant* against Him; They *Indict* Him of Treason against *Cesar*, and pursued the *Articles* so hotly, that they never left him till they saw Him Dead on the *Cross*; which God took so Grievously from them, that he Smote them into so perfect Blindness and Distraction, that with the *Sodomites* they are groping in the Dark, and looking for the Door that gives Entrance into Heaven, but cannot find it to this day, and are yet *ridiculously* waiting for Him, that *sixteen hundred years* ago, and more, had his happy *Nativity* into the World. Miserable Men, they *knew not the day of their Visitation*, and now it is hid from their Eyes.

To a fair length had *Abraham* Spun out the Thread of his Hopes, which now shall be wound up in one *Bottom of Fruition*. He that was to come, shall come, and tarry no longer: *Patience is an inseparable Companion, from a lively Faith in the Divine Promises*. How surely shall the Decrees of God in due time be delivered of the Blessings that are in them, to crown up all long Suffering into Joy and Pleasure! Thus while this happy Man is sitting at the door of his *Tent*, with a Soul full of Divine Contemplation and Comfort, Behold, Three Persons, (in Appearance *Men*, in Reality *Angels* cloathed in their Shapes) sent from Heaven to his *Sarah*, with Orders to provide a Cradle for the little Great Heir of *Abraham's* Hopes and Prayers, that now shortly shall make his welcome Appearance into the World: He accosts them with a Majesty and Humility sweetly mixt, and becoming well his Great *Quality*: They may not pass by him without receiving

ceiving some Royal Marks of his Courteous and Hospitable Soul: Generosity is the Rich Enamel of Greatness, the very Life of it, without which it loses its Essence. *Abraham* is the Copy of the truest *Generosity*, as of the strongest Faith in the World, to let Princes know that *Honour* is not incompatible with *Piety*: He had received his *Education* from the Court of Heaven, and accommodates his demeanour perfectly to the Model prescribed him from above. He participates of the Nature of Him who spreads the Table of his *Bounty* for all his Creatures to sit at. He has nothing but what is at the Service of every one: These were Strangers to him, yet shall not part away from his *Royal Tent* e'er they become his *Guests*. He Addresses to one who seems the chiefest of the *Three*, and (with greater Earnest than others can crave it) beseeches them to give him the Honour of their *Company*, and themselves the Refreshment of a short *Repast*. Behold *Abraham* at home, watching Opportunities of doing Good, courting very Strangers to receive his Entertainment, doubling the Invitation to clear it from the Jealousie of a *Complement*, and afterwards his *Cheer* to Free himself from the ill Reputation of a *Churl*. They are Alien from *Abraham's Spirit*, who void their Houses to avoid their Duties, and *hide themselves from their own Flesh*; or if they keep home themselves, are yet from home to all others, and (what *Job* could not) love to *Eat their Morsel alone*, who are sometimes Accursed to that degree of *Baseness* and *Cruelty* to their own *Bodies*, that they starve Themselves to save the Charges of

Living; God hath given them *Wealth* enough, but no *Power* or *Heart* to eat thereof, they live by *Contemplation* on what they have, and never adventure to pass into *Fruition*, this is a fore Judgment. *Expedition* heightens the *Civility*, *Abraham* hastes to *Sarah*; *Make ready quickly*; and himself ran to the Herd: His kindness must not hinder them in their Progress, Time is precious, the whole Day was not designed for the Belly. *Wo unto them that rise early in the morning that they may follow strong Drink, that continue until Night, till Wine enflame them.*

The *Master* of the Feast, is yet ignorant of the *Quality* of his *Guests*. *There is no judging of inward worth by outward Appearance.* Since a plain *Vesture* once Shrouded the *King of Glory* from the Eyes of Men. Who many times before the uniting of his *Divinity* with humane *Flesh*, was pleased in Old Time to assume the *Shape* of Man, and pass Visits upon his dearest *Servants*. *His delights were with the Sons of Men.* He was no less Person than the Son of God, for whom *Abraham* was preparing, attended on by his *Angels* in the same form, tho (by conjecture) somewhat inferiour in Appearance of *Habit*. What a stately Embassy was this to an *Abraham*! He is a *Mighty Prince* indeed, to whom the *Kings Son* is deputed *Legate*: *Isaac* (as *Jesus* himself) hath *Angels* to Prophecie his *Conception*; and now is *Abraham* giving Order for the *Annunciation Dinner* to those *Guests* as never had *Stomack* for any; but have *Spiritual Food* of their own, more proper to their holy *Natures*, while this shall be digested all into

Air;

Air: Yet Nine Months hence shall *Sarah* find the *Milk* again in her own *Breasts*, more genuinely to suckle her little *Son*. The *Collation* is taken for the greater *Pleasure* under a *Tree*, which then was honoured in lending her *Shade* to the *Sun* himself, by an humble *Dilatation* of her *Branches* over his *Glorious Head*. And *Abraham* waited in *Person*, to teach us that while we do our *Duty* to *Men*, at the same instant we *Act* it to *God* himself, and do but honour him in *shewing Respect* to our fellow *Creatures*: Nor need we fear that we forget our selves, while we intend it as *Glory* to him. So well did *Abraham* demean himself in this humble *Service*, that the *Holy Guest*, to whom he performed it, disdained not an *Imitation* of his *Father*, when he Took on himself the form of a *Servant*, and came not to be ministred to, but to minister. The *Head* of *Angels* washing the *Feet* of *Men*. The *Lower* we sink in *Humility*, the *Higher* shall we rebound in *Glory*.

But where is *Sarah*? Where is she but where she should be, within her own *Apariment*? Had the *Guests* been of her *Sex*, she had not fail'd to have waited on them with the same *Officioufness* and *Duty*; but now is *Observant* enough in confining her self to her own *Province*, giving an *Example* to all her *Daughters*, of *Modesty* and *Obedience* to their own *Husbands*. Tho' she give them not her whole *Presence*, yet she lends them an *Ear*; the *Contiguity* of her *Tent* to the *Tree* gives her advantage of overhearing their *Discourse*; and while she attentively listens, finds her self concern'd in the *Conference*. Happy that *Soul* who hearkening to the blessed *Words*

of the same *Jesus*, while he *Speaketh* not of us only, but to us in his *Ordinances*, and in us by his *Spirit*. *I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak Peace.* Thus *Sarah* hearkens, and hears *Good News*; yea, so good, that her *Faith* is at a loss to believe it, and she imagines that these Men only Complement her *Husband* in *Discourse*, which (they think) will be most Grateful to him; and therefore she laughs at the *Jest*, confuting its Vanity by a kind of *Retortion*, which is often made use of to a ridiculous *Argument*: The which, how closely soever she had *Compress'd* within the Concave of her Breast; yet could she not detain it from the *Ears* of a God, to whom our darkest thoughts are equally discernable with the loudest Exclamations. While she is weighing Omnipotence in the *Scales* of her own Judgment, and fancying it too light to encounter with her own Weakness, she renders her self justly liable to severe Censure. *Wherefore did Sarah laugh? is any thing too hard for God?* The God who is able to raise up *Children* to *Abraham* of *stones*, might surely be thought as able to do it by his own *Wife*, how Hopeless or Uncapable soever. The Reproof falling so heavy on *Sarah*, and *Abraham* being ignorant of her Guilt, makes him begin to suspect that his *Guests* were more than *Men*, and that they carried about them Omniscient *Ears*. Man knows no more than what he draws from the outward *Organ*; but he that made the *Ears*, needs none himself to convey Knowledge to him. Both *Abraham* and *Sarah* laugh at the Tidings of a Son, yet is *Sarah's* laughing

laughing an Act perfectly different from that of her Husbands; He laughing in *Faith* and *Joy*, she in *Distrust* and *Unbelief*. God hath Mercy on the Infirmities of his Servants, *Sarah* is reprov'd, but not reject'd; the Reproof strikes upon her Conscience, and makes her afraid, That *Fear* casts her into a further Guilt. She denies that she laughed, and is shamefully convinc'd of what she knew her self Conscious: Yet shall not all this invalidate the Decree. *God will have Mercy on whom he will*, let *Sarah* Laugh and deny it too; yet *God will not deny himself*: *Sarah shall have a Son*.

The *Embassy* thus happily concluded, the Legates depart, they have a Commission to execute of a different Nature e're they return into Heaven. *Abraham* that he might not be defective in the least part of his Duty, performs the last Act of his *Hospitality*, and genteelly brings them on their way. He had kindly invited them, liberally treated them, now he as *Courteously* dismisseth them: He Ran to call them in at the first, and afterwards Ran to the Herd for Provision for them: He stood waiting upon them while they took it; yet still hath he *Feet* to travel with them. Thus Good Men never fail in doing their Duty: they go on from *Strength to Strength*; They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. *Abraham's* vigorous Heart adds *Sinews* to his feeble *Joints*. We should never complain of tired *Limbs*, if we had but zealous *Affections*: Get but *Abraham's* Company into thine Heart, thou wilt have *Abraham's* Heart in the same Company: 'twas when *Christ*

was not with them, that the three Disciples fell *Asleep*.

At the steering of their Course towards *Sodom*, I doubt not but *Abraham's* Heart began to *Throbb*: He was no Stranger to the Villanies of those *Cities*, and the approach of such *Inquisitors* as these (he fears) will bode them little Good. A less skilful *Augury* may serve to foretell the *Destruction* of Wickedness; yet is he modestly Silent, and dares not enquire into the Mysteries of God. 'Tis ill prying into the Estate of Others, till we find some sure ground of Security to our selves. But *Abraham* is the Friend of God, and Communication of Secrets is one of the Veins that conveys Life and Strength to the whole Body of Friendship; 'tis not every one that is admitted into the Cabals of Princes. *Abraham* is a Favourite, and fit to be one of the Privy Council of Heaven: God that had honoured him by a Revelation of the secrets of his Love to himself, cannot keep from him the discovery of his Intentions of Wrath on the Wicked. *Abraham* shall know that his God can be as Just as Good, and that few partak'd of the special Priviledges that himself was bless'd in. 'Tis no small Obligation that lyes upon the Faithful, from the Knowledge of their differing in Condition from the worst of Men, only by distinguishing Mercy. What are we that thou shouldst manifest thy self unto us, and not unto the World. Faith grows up to a perfect Stature, by the Knowledge of every dispensation of God. The Prophets enforce their Doctrines from the Examples of the fiercest Executions of Vengeance. Pass ye unto *Calneh*, and see,
 &c.

&c. *Abraham*, who hereafter should read Lectures upon *Sodom's* Flames, to affright his Children and Family from *Sodom's* Lusts, shall first hear with his *Ear*, and afterwards see with his *Eye* the pernicious and dreadful Desolation that Sin had made upon them, that with greater sence of those Calamities he might terrifie others against the Sins that procur'd them: God knowing how powerfull Application so Experienc'd a *Preacher* as *Abraham*, would surely make from such a Text. Shall I hide from *Abraham* the thing which I do, &c. For I know him, that he will Command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, &c.

Behold the great Ordinance of *Family-Instruction* establish'd by *Divine Institution*. *Abraham* must execute both Offices of *King* and *Priest*. In vain is Obedience exacted from such as know not their Duty: But in order to the means of that Knowledge, Obedience is justly required, and Jurisdiction given by God Himself to enforce it. I know *Abraham*, that he will Command his Children and Servants, &c. If the Sword or the Word be too precarious, look for Confusion and Ignorance to prevail over all. *Abraham* is invested with a perfect Power to subject them to the Discipline of God: He was Sovereign over his Family, and God is so far from Clipping his Authority, that he gives him the Broad Seal of Heaven to confirm his Commission. He had Power of Life and Death within his own House; they were not worthy to live, should they not learn the saving Knowledge of the holy Commandments; to little purpose were they

Circum-

Circumcised in the Flesh, if they be not enlightened into the Knowledge of that Sacrament, nor how far it oblig'd them to Obedience and Duty. *But I know Abraham that he will teach them, &c.* Even this Great Prince will not think it beneath him to *Catechise* the meanest *Herdsmen* in his Family: 'Tis the Work of God, an *Abraham* hath an Heart to it; 'tis a Glorious work, the Saving of Souls, and *Abraham* shall be rewarded for it: 'Tis transmitting Piety to Posterity, and the Child unborn will praise God for *Abraham*: 'Tis the advancing the Interest and Glory of God upon Earth, which never faileth to bring to Glory in Heaven.

See the decay of Religion, and weep tears of Blood: Where lives the Son of *Abraham*, that improves his Authority in his *Family* for God, and the *Souls* he hath made (unless in a cold and perfunctory manner?) If an *Impious* casting off the Thoughts and mention of God, unless in cursed Oaths, and fearful *Imprecations*; if an utter banishing his Holy *Worship* and Service, as an unfashionable disparaging thing: If the *Training* up *Children* into the low and base Opinion of the strict Wayes and Methods of Godliness, (such as their Parents have sucked in before them:) If *Servants* must think it ill Manners to serve their Maker better than their profane *Masters*, and must wear the *Livery* of their Relation and Vices together: If instead of *Praying*, *Catechising*, and *Holy Instruction*, and Excellent *Example*, which ever flourished in the Great Family of this mighty Prince, there be nothing but *Prophaneness*, *Atheism*, and all the *Trades* of *Confusion*,

fufion, driven and carried on with a perfect Industry from day to day; surely we must sadly conclude, that the Good *Abraham* hath but few *Heirs* to follow him in the same holy *Path*. God knew this faithful *Servant* to be constant to his *Glory* and *Interest*; and *all the World* shall one day know that such as these are very *Traytors* both to Him and their Own *Happinefs* for ever.

'Twas because of this *Fidelity* that the Great *Abraham* was admitted into the *Secrets* of his *Judgment* against *Sodom*: The clamour of whose *Provocations* would suffer divine *Justice* to forbear them no longer. God could not be in *Quiet* for them in *Heaven*; either they must cease to be thus wicked, or to have any further *Being* in the *World*; He will ease himself of these *Adversaries*, they shall no longer oppress his *Patience*, or abuse his *Goodness*. His *Long-suffering* had run out to the utmost *Extremity*. He is now ready for *vengeance*, they ripe for *destruction*. When the whole *World* shall be white unto the great *Harvest*, Then shall the *Sickle* of *Ruine* cut it down: Yet shall not *Execution* be done upon *Sodom* before all the *Formalities* of *Judgment* precede; *Process* and *Enquiry* shall be made into the *Merits* of their *Cause*. The *Judge* of *all the Earth* will do right. None shall perish but from the plain *Evidence* and *Conviction* of their own *Guilt*. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just are thy Judgments*. Two *Angels* are sent in *Commission* to make the *Inquisition*, we shall anon hear what the *Issue* of that *Trial* will be.

Now is *Abraham* left with the *Lord* alone; and 'tis remarkable, that himself, who had vouchsafed

safed to Honour the *Tabernacle* of this *holy Man* with his gracious Presence, disdains to bless the *Infamous City* with the same favour. *God is far from the ungodly*; but he waiteth here still, to hearken to the *Prayer of the Righteous*.

Abraham receives not the *News of Sodom's* destruction with any pleasure at all. *Gods Children* (as himself) *delight not in the death of the wicked*, but rather that they turn and live. 'Tis *Fury* and not *Zeal*, that on every affront calls for *Fire from Heaven* to destroy. There is a *City* will know this one day, that hath made so many *Massacres*, and kindled so many *Flames* upon the *Bodies of the Saints*. *Abraham* prepares to *Plead* as *Fiercely* as he had *Fought* for *Sodom* before. How serviceable are the *Favourites* to the *Enemies of God*, who yet hate and persecute them. Down he falls, and on the bare *Knees* of his very *Soul* Beggs, That *God* would maintain the Honour of his own *Justice*, and that the *Righteous* might not taste of the bitter *Cup of the Wicked*: And further, (If it would please him) that the *Wicked* might live for the *Righteous* sake, and the *Righteous* for their own. Tho' the *Wicked* will not suffer the *Righteous* to live (for whose sake themselves live,) and with the *Jews* kill their *Saviours*, yet are the *Righteous* of another *Spirit*, and would give their lives, that all Men were as themselves, the innocent and blameless *Sons of God* in the midst of a crooked and perverse *Nation*. 'Tis wonderful to find, how *Abraham* by the bare *Breath* of his *Prayers* makes the *Decree* to shake: The *lifting up of his Hands* prevails within a trifle, to make *God* let fall the *Sword of Justice* out of his own. He reduceth

duceth Him to the Terms of an easie and merciful Composition. To bring him to fall from *Fifty* to *Ten* was a mighty Conquest. Who but an *Abraham* could have made such *tugs* at the Heart of God, that he makes it stand within a small point to the Compass of *Sodoms* safety, which he verily believed his strength had effected? But 'tis ill pleading for a bad Clyent in a worse Cause; yet a gracious Grant treads on the Heels of every motion which so powerful an *Intercessour* had made; and *Abraham* shall not say, that God had denied him one request of his Lips. He that comes with *Dust* and *Ashes* in his Mouth, and those humble Apologies for the Presumption of a poor Nothing Creature, on his Heart, as He, can never fail of a good return from the Throne of *Grace*; and doubtless God suffering himself to be *unskrewed* to so low a *Pegg*, does demonstrate the mighty Victories of effectual Prayer, so that had there been any thing worthy of Saving, *Sodom* had continued to this day. How happy are we, that have a greater than *Abraham* to intercede for us, even the very Same to whom *Abraham* pleaded for these *Cities*, is Himself become our powerful Advocate, and able to save to the uttermost, when by the vertue of *five Wounds* he melts away wrath from the whole World of his offending People, for whom he Prayes.

What an universal Defection was made by these Wretches, when not *Ten* good Men (taking in *Lors* Family with them) can be pickt out of *Five* whole Cities, to save them! What a Triumphant Court did *Lucifer* keep in the fair Plains of *Jordan*, where all his Subjects are so well

well instructed into so perfect Obedience to his Hellish Orders, that but One *Nonconformist* Family can be found in them all. How hopeless and desperate was the Interest of *Heaven* there! Where Sin prevails to boast of *equal* Numbers, 'tis very dismal; and amongst *Ten* Virgins, for *five* of them to be found Foolish; and the Devil impudently dares to call for the *Poll* from God. But here the *Syrians* of Hell are so numerous, that they fill all the Country, and not *Ten* poor *Kidds* appear to be folded up into a *little flock* for God.

The Disease being thus Epidemical and Outragious, and the Tokens of Judgment appearing so thick upon every bosom, *Abraham* gives over the Suit. When Grace it self was weary of searching after Objects to conferr its Favours on, and could find none, the wind of Prayer ceasing, a terrible storm must follow.

'Tis worthy our Remark, how patiently God Attends to the Petitions of his *Abraham*, waiting so long till every one was dispatch'd, and he had no more to *Present*. *Abraham* himself was more weary of Asking, than God of Granting; but when this *Master of Requests* had nothing more to offer to his *Lord*, he humbly bows, and makes his Retreat to his own *Lodgings*.

In Order of History, the Judgment against Sodom should here follow, which is made up to the Reader, in the Book of Tragedies.

C H A P. IX.

Abraham removes from Mamre into Gerar, where Sarah is taken from him by the King, and restored by means of a Dream. The Birth of Isaac. The casting out of Ishmael. Abraham and Abimelech enter into League.

A *Braham* had long enjoyed the sweet Air and Pleasures of the Plains of *Mamre*, but the Overthrow of these Cities, and the unwholsome Vapours issuing from the Bituminous *Lake*, rendered the bordering Country less pleasant and unhealthy for him to dwell in: Besides now here were few left to whom he could extend the Duties of *Hospitality*; he was deprived of the comfort of *Company* on whom he might exercise *Piety*; he resolves therefore to remove; and doubtless 'twas not necessary for Him who was ordained as another *Sun* to enlighten the dark corners of the Earth, to stand still too long in one *station*: Other Countries must be blessed in the happy influences of his Presence. You may find him now in *Gerar*, where if you see the *Comedy of Egypt* Re-acted, and *Sarah* become the Sister of *Abraham* the second time, do not much admire that she is taken from him, since *Sarah* is the Miracle of *Women*; who now in the *Nintieth* year of her Age is able to dragg Princes after her, and carries those

those Charms in her Face, that lays all the Scepters of the World at her Feet. The *Learned* of her Posterity tell us, That God continued her Beauty by the same power (as he did afterwards *Moses's* strength) without any decay or *Impeachment* of *Wast*: And her *Ninety* would not have passed for above *Forty* in the conjecture of Judgment; the *Rose* and the *Lilly* still vying superiority in her Cheeks, and she lives a *Type* of the Church, that is *without spot or wrinkle*, but all Fair in the Eyes of her Lord. *Abimelech* is desperately in Love, and this is the second time that *Sarah* might have been made a *Queen*, had she been but the pretended Sister, tho' we find her not repining at the loss of that Honour, since to be *Abraham's* Wife was greater Dignity than to wear all the *Crowns* of the Earth. This being the year of *Isaac's* Conception, God sends out an *Injunction* to stop proceedings; it must not be suspected that *Abraham's* Heir is the reputed Son of the King of *Gerar*, whom God smites with such a disease, as cools the Heat of his Lust after *Sarah*, and renders him perfectly *Impotent* to all. While he is startled at the *Plague*, God unriddles it to him in a *Dream*: There was a *Lady* too many in his Court, whose company was ever fatal to all besides her own *Husband*; his own *Life* must be redeemed by her *Liberty*, but if he restore her not, let him look for Death. There are Authors that find such Characters of Piety on this *Abimelech*, as have emboldned them to *signalize* him for a Saint; others will acknowledge him good and *Righteous* in this Act only; Some say all was but the effect of a Fright. It

were

were well if those *Evidences* were found in many *Christians* that profess true Grace, as appeared in this *Heathen*. You shall find, First, That the Threatning had Impression upon him, he *Hears and Fears*, and *hardens not his Heart*. Secondly, He humbly Vindicates his own Innocency: *In the Integrity of my heart have I done this*. Thirdly, He justly fixes the Guilt on Themselves, who had both of them concealed the *Conjugal Relation*. Fourthly, God himself takes part with him, and accepts his honest Plea: *I know that thou didst this in the Integrity of thy Heart*. Fifthly, As soon as he was convinc'd of his Error, he Repents it. Sixthly, He reproves *Abraham* for exposing his *Kingdom* to the Dangers of Sin, which he knew to be Great: *Thou hast brought on me and my Kingdom a Great Sin*. Seventhly, He presently sets on the Duty of Reformation, and removes the cause of the Judgment: *He restored him his Wife*. Eighthly, He imparts the Menaces of God to his *Courtiers*, that they also might fear God: *The Men were sore afraid*. Ninthly, He makes satisfaction to *Abraham* for the Injury done, and presents him with *Cattel and Money*. Tenthly, He submits to the Ordinance of God, and accepts of the Prayers of *Abraham* as the Means of his *Healing*. Eleventhly, He enters Friendship with him as a Favourite of God, and thinks his *Kingdom* Blessed in his Company: *Behold my Land is before thee, dwell where it pleaseth thee*.

What fair Fruits are here growing in the Wilderness of Nature, while the *Inclosed Garden* is overspread with so many *Noisom Weeds*!

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whose Heart doth not bleed to see those that call themselves *Christians*, Laughing at those Threats that Menace infallible Death to such as retain the Lusts They *keep*! who yet are stupified to that degree, as to think rather that God Himself is False, than that they themselves shall Dye: Who hath yet *Sworn by Himself*, that they are all but *Dead Men* and cannot Live: If they should, His *Honour* and *Truth* must Dye for them. These draw the Curtains about them, and sleep on Securely in their *GUILTS* (while yet their *Judgment* sleepeth not:) They are so far from arising to Reformation with *Abimelech* (whose Bed could not hold him after the Affrightful Dream) that they fancy no *Necessity* for any, and they resolve against all, till they awake in the next World, and *Flames* open the Eyes that *Sin* had shut, and makes them Feel the Tormenting Sence of their Folly and Impenitency for ever.

But what is so rarely found among us, we may note all the parts of a *True Repentance* Appearing in this *King*. With what *Care* doth he clear himself of this matter to God! With what *Indignation* doth he charge *Abraham* for bringing this Sin and Evil upon him! *Thou hast brought Sin upon my Kingdom*. With what *Fear* doth he *Summon* his Servants about him, to declare the danger they were in! With what *Zeal* doth he hasten about the removing the Cause that had brought that danger upon them! What *Revenge* doth he act upon himself, by laying a chargeable Fine, which he contentedly pays unto *Abraham* for his Folly! From the first *Revelation* he passes to *Conviction*, from *Conviction* he proceeds

proceeds to *Reformation*; from that to *Satisfaction*, from all to *Absolution* and *Health* again. If after all this *Abimelech's* Soul miscarry of Heaven, and fall short of *Salvation*, what shall become of *Thousands* that never kept him Company half this way, in the high *Road* to eternal Life?

But why doth God suffer *Abraham* and *Sarah* to Trip a second time, and subject themselves to the just Reproof of an *Heathen*; who seemed in this the more *Righteous* of the Two, and one would have taken *Abimelech* for the *Prophet*, and *Abraham* for the *Pagan*, that had heard him so severely check'd? What shall we say? Was there not Need of a *Thorn in the Flesh* to humble him, under the abundance of all the *Revelations* that God had made to him? Or was it for our sake? yea for our sake doubtless, that if through the *Infirmity* of the *Flesh* we should unhappily *Relapse* into the same Sin, whereof we have truly repented before, yet may we not despair, when we remember that the Great *Abraham* twice fell. Let us be sure that we be Heirs of his Faith, as well as of his Frailty, and then will God overlook our Iniquity as he did his, and remember our sin no more.

God Himself keeping *Sarah's* Reckoning for her, fails her not a day. The *Hundredth Year* of *Abraham's* Life, is the Joyfullest that ever he saw. Now the *Womb* of the Divine Promise opens to Purpose, when he sees himself the happy Father of the long expected Heir, his Faith and Patience is ripened into Fruition. Long did the World wait for a *Saviour*, at the last he came, and the World must again wait for his

second coming to compleat up all their *Happiness*; for yet a little while, and he that is to come, will come and will not tarry, and the Just shall live by Faith. The Child at eight days Age, is given back to God, and receives the Seal of that Covenant which entitles him to a better Father than Abraham. Sarah is so astonished at the Joy, that she hardly believes yet, what her Eyes see, and Laughs at the Conceit, how all the World will Laugh to hear the News of her being a Wet Nurse in her Dry Age: She gives a good Example to her Greatest Daughters, Not to deny the Breast to the Children of their own Bodies; Even the Sea Monsters draw out the Breast, they give suck to their young ones, but the Daughter of my People is become Cruel, like the Ostriches in the Wilderness. Sarah will not endure that her little Isaac should have a second Mother, whose ill Qualities he may perhaps unhappily Suck in with her Milk. 'Tis pity but unnatural Mothers should feel the Judgment of a Miscarrying Womb and Dry Breasts, who have no Rolling of Bowels towards their Innocent Babes, who hold up their little Hands and Eyes, begging with what Earnestness they can, that they may not be turned off to a Stranger. Isaac is more happy than to be deserted by his Mother, she thinks it not below her great Ladiship to Swaddle up his little Body with her own Hands, and to suffer the Trouble with the same Satisfaction that she enjoys the Comfort of a Son. Had Mephibosheth's Mother been the true Daughter of Sarah, he had never been Crippled as he was, by the Negligence of a Nurse.

Abraham,

Abraham, to keep up the Practice (in this Country) of his old *Hospitality* which he ever exercised in all the *East*, and taking hold of an Opportunity wherein he might do Good to the Souls of Men by his holy Familiarity and Conference, as also to strengthen his Interest in their Affections by an Act of *Humanity* and *Courtesie*, Celebrates the Feast of *Isaac's* Weaning with great Solemnity and Cost, and makes *Invitation* of all the Neighbouring Persons of Quality to be his *Guests*; where doubtless he Sauced his Dishes with such Excellent Discourses, as tended chiefly to the exalting the Wonders of Gods Love in so signal a Mercy, as that of a *Son* in his *Dead Years*, and what the World might expect in due time from that other Promised, who should one day come into the World to make them Happy in the next. He was not shy to read the *Lectures* of his own *Life* and *History*, (a *Life* so full of Miracles and Benedictions) that if by any means he might provoke some of them to joyn themselves to the same God, that had been Good and Kind to him in every Region where he came. And *Sarah* had not forgotten the holy Trade she drove on so Zealously in *Haran*; she had her Arguments too, and helps to Clinch in her *Husbands* *Doctrine* by her own *Exhortations*: *Abraham's* Company must needs be the most Delightful and Profitable to them, who of all Men living was best qualified to speak from his own Experience on Subjects they had never heard or known. If Forreign Affairs and Customs of Nations delight them, he can lead them into *Egypt*, and acquaint them with the Intreigues

of *Pharaoh's Court*, where himself so long had conversed among them. If *Military Affairs* better please them, he can give them the Faithfullest account of the Late War with the *four Kings*, wherein himself had been *General*. If they will listen to more Melancholly Matters, they may hear from him the *Tragedy of Sodom*, of whose *Flames* his own *Eyes* had been sad Witnesses: If they will pass from all, and attend to the Wonders of his own Family, He can recommend to them the Advantage of Civility to Strangers, forasmuch as himself thereby *had entertained Angels*, and held long Conferences with God Himself: 'Tis a noble Design to Consecrate the Fruits of our Lips and Tables together, to the Glory of God and the Profit of Men. Speech is the peculiar Faculty of Man, by which the Sentiments of the Mind are communicated and made publick for the Good or Hurt of others. What Care then is Incumbent on the Children of *Abraham* to speak, as well as to *Act* like him; *My mouth shall be filled with thy praise, and with thy Salvation all the day long*. The Tongue is the Glory of Man, which should not be employed in dishonour to God; he deserves not to speak at all, that speaks not the Praises of his Maker. The Feast being ended, and the *Guests* dismissed, *Abraham* returns to make Digestion of all, by taking a Walk with God in Meditation and Prayer, and begs that what had passed that day in his Family, might redound to the Honour of God, and the everlasting Good of his Friends.

Not long after this, there breaks out a little War in his Family; His *two Sons* are of different Mothers,

Mothers, and consequently have different Interests to carry on. *Ishmael* (questionless set on by *Hagar*) is found not to bear so fraternal Affections to little *Isaac*, as he ought: He is told that he is come into the World to undermine him, who stood so fair in the hopes of his *Fathers* Estate before his Birth: Some are of the Opinion, that he minded privily to kill him: Others only that he loaded him with Jears and Flouts as he played with his Companions, rendering him Ridiculous and Contemptible, by holding out of the Finger, and putting out of his Lip, boasting himself to be the true Heir; whatsoever it were, the Fault is expounded by the Holy Ghost Himself, into the Guilt of *Persecution*, which is as well perform'd by the Sword of the Mouth as the Hand. Little *Isaac* is an Early Martyr, and the Type of Him that was sought for to be slain in his Swadling-Cloaths. *Herod* would fain Worship and Kill him at once, which afterwards was effectually done by those who first wounded him by their Lips: Behold the King of the Jews; and then dispatched him with their Hands: The King dies on the Cross.

Sarah knew well enough whence all this Spight and Malice was derived, the Sons Spirit was but Exasperated by the envious *Mother*, and she finds no possibility of Peace or Security while they continued together in one Family; she prudently foresaw some danger in case of *Abraham's* Death. What knew she but *Hagar* by her subtil Insinuations and Carriage might form such a Party against her, that she and her *Isaac* might be cast out: Therefore, to se-

cure her Self and the *Right Heir*, she plots sometimes to prevent the danger, and brings her *Writ of Ejectment* against her Adversary with such Passion and Resolution, as she seems to command the Issue of the *Suit*, before the Judge had considered the ground of the Quarrel. *Abraham* is the only *Arbiter* in the Case, and is hardly solicited to give Sentence against his own *Bowels*. He is divided in his Affections, and hath no heart to pass the Order for his own Childs *Expulsion*. *The thing was very grievous unto him, because of his Son*. While the matter hangs in suspense, (and *Abraham* is struggling between the Duties of an *Husband* and a *Father*, and cannot so easily be brought over to forget his Nature and Natural Affections,) God Himself comes in to give the *Casting Voice*, and Votes clearly for *Sarah*: The good Man that never stuck at any thing that his God commanded, he it never so grievous or opposite to his Interests, now is willing to forget himself and every thing in Obedience to his Will, and gives present Order for the departure of the *Bond-woman and her Son*. He rises early to begin the day with so difficult a Peice of Obedience, having wrestled all the Night against *Nature, Affection, and Self*: Neither *Hagar's* intreaties, nor *Ishmael's* cryes, can work any Repentance in him, *Though they sought it carefully with Tears*: He is Obstinate and Peremptory in his Obsequiousness to God, whose holy Commands must be chearfully followed with a *Deaf Ear*, and *Heart* hardened against every thing that oppose them. We never arrive to the degree of

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Abraham's universal Conformity to the Divine Will, till we shut out all *Inclinations* to the ruinous Solicitations of the Creatures.

But if nothing will avail, and the young *Gentleman* must determinately be gone; we hope the Son of so great a Prince, shall pass off in *State*, with a suitable Provision of Maintenance, and Servants to attend him: What should be the meaning that he who is Propheſied to be the *Father of a Nation, and of Twelve Princes*, should be sent away with a loaf of Bread, and a Bottle of Water from so Great and Rich a Parent as *Abraham*: (The Ladies of this Age are not so cheaply *unwisted* from their Amorous Gallants, without Honourable Settlements for Themselves and Children.) *Abraham* was Affectionate and tender-hearted: What? not so much as a *Slave* or an *Ass* to carry the *Wallet*, but it must be hung on the Shoulders of *Hagar*, whose heavy Heart was ready to Break with the Load of Sorrow and Care, that already oppress'd it? Is *Abraham* grown thus Pitiless now? 'Twere Blasphemy against his Piety to assert, that He whose Generous Nature Appear'd in the profuse Communications of his Charity to very *Strangers*, should be thus Penurious and Miserlike in his Fatherly Contributions to his own *Child*. The Learned strive to clear up his Reputation by many Arguments: Some I fear overdo it, when they conclude, That Servants and Cattel, and all Accommodations for Life, are included here in the Scripture Phrase of Bread and Water: Others perhaps under-do it, when they tell us, that he gave them no more, to teach

teach them Faith and Dependance upon God, whom he left to provide for them, when that little was spent. With the same Argument He might have given them nothing, committing them altogether to the Providence of God, with the cold Charity of a naked Wish, *Depart in Peace, be ye warmed and filled.* These make the *Father of the Faithful* almost an Infidel, and at best but a *Solifidian*: Some falsely enough impute it to *Sarah's* Revenge; and they that aimed at *All*, should now have *Nothing* (surely he that was so well treated in *Pharaoh's* Court, was not so ungrateful to a poor Handmaid of his Country, to send her forth to starve :) Others affix it to their own *Insolence*, who were grown too rude and turbulent in the House of *Abraham*. The most probable conjecture that best agrees with all Circumstances, is, that what was now given them, was to serve only for present necessity, and *Abraham* directing them whither to go, promis'd to take care to supply them further, as their Necessities required: which also he did.

'Till *Isaac's* Birth, the *Bondwoman* and her Son had quiet entertainment in *Abraham's* Family: Now the Heir is born, they agree not together; but *Hagar* trudges out with her *Bottle* and *Bag* to wander in the *Wilderness*: Who sees not the *Old Law* marching after her (with all its Ceremonies in the same Bag) at the bringing in of the *New* by *Jesus Christ*, the true Heir of Righteousness and Salvation: For ever are they departed now, to return no more into the Church of God: And how peaceable possessi-

possession Sin doth enjoy in the Natural Heart, where it rules all the *Rost*, hath an absolute Dominion, and beats down all before it; till anon God in pity to the miserable Soul, gives it Grace to conceive the true *Heir*, which once Formed, and growing up to some Strength, takes Arms, and with the Assistance of Heaven maintains the *War*, which is happily Crown'd with thorough Conquest of all Opposition, and receives its *Palms* in the Everlasting Kingdom.

Hagar and *Ishmael* are gone, whose wandrings and sufferings in the *Wilderness*, are but a farther *Allegory* of the present Sorrows of the miserable Posterity of *Abraham*; who when the true *Heir* appeared in the World, were then in possession of their *Fathers House*: But for mocking and *Persecution* of the Great promised Son, are dealt with as *Ishmael*, cast out of the blessed Inheritance of both *Canaans*, and are wandering in the *Desart* of damnable *Error* with the *Wallet* of an insupportable Burden on their Shoulders, feeding still on the musty *Bread*, and drinking out of the *Old Bottles*, the stale *Puddle Water* of the Law, in contempt of the pure Springs of the *Living Water* so freely offer'd them, and the *New Wine* of the everlasting Gospel. They lye with *Ishmael* under a *Shrub*, not so sensible of their *Penury* as he, forlorn and dejected, with the Curse of the Blood of *Jesus* upon them: They perish in the midst of Abundance, and have no Eyes to see the *Well of Life*, out of which the whole Church is so sweetly refreshed in Vivacity and Power. O that the

same Good *Angel* would come with a Message of *Comfort* and *Mercy* to them, as he did unto *Hagar*, and taking away the Veyl that is upon their Hearts to this day, they may clearly perceive *the things that belong to their Eternal Peace!* Even so come Lord *Jesus*, Come quickly!

Holiness is that Great Luminary (darting its Beams so conspicuously round about the World where it shines) that draws every Eye to admire it, rendring its Subjects so Amiable, that those who cannot shine in the same Light, desire yet to sit under and enjoy its Blessed *Influences*. *Abraham* scattered the Divine Rayes of his Piety and Goodness so illustriously over all the Kingdom of *Gerar*, (for which God had sent him thither) that the very Court is Clarified by his *Brightness*, and cannot think its self happy without a nearer Conjunction with this Great Planet. *Sarah's* Beauty had Fetter'd the Affections of this King already; now is his Understanding Captivated perfectly to the divine Presence of *Abraham's* Piety. What a Glory was it to this Great Saint to see *Abimelech* himself, with *Phicol* his Lord-General, and all their Princely *Retinue*, come bowing to him, and making earnest Suit that he would become their *Allie*. The King had found by experience that God had blessed his Kingdom for *Abraham's* sake; and now *Abraham* must bless *Abimelech* for his own sake: He had certainly learn'd how great things God had done by and for *Abraham*, and therefore thought it a part of true Policy to confederate himself with so great a *Favourite*, and to ensure the Friendship of him that was the

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Friend of God: He grounds his Request upon *Abraham's Interest*, and nearness to God. *God is with thee in every thing that thou dost.* A very Glorious Testimony out of the Mouth of a King, and doubtless no whit ungrateful unto *Abraham* himself, who loved to hear the Kindnesses of his God to him acknowledged by very *Heathens*: This gave *Abraham* the Honour, and *Abimelech* the Benefit of the League. If God were with *Abraham*, how much should *Abimelech* advantage himself by his Friendship! And the King knew well enough how far he strengthened himself by being in Covenant with him that was in Covenant with God: That God who had sworn to him to be a *Friend to his Friends*, and an *Enemy to his Enemies*: Hence he is so zealous to perpetuate the Agreement, that he moves for the durable Extension of it to his *Heirs and Successors*: *His Son, and his Sons Son*; and will have it confirmed by the highest Obligation of a Sacred *Oath*, which binds the Conscience under the dreadfullest penalties. Well did *Abimelech* know that *Abraham* (having once sworn) would suffer even Death it self, rather than to be false to his Covenant, or incur the Anger of his God. (*Piety hath a place in the Consciences, tho' not in the Affections of Strangers to God.*) *Abraham* would be stedfast enough when once he had fastened him with the Nail of the *Sanctuary*: And himself should dye with greater satisfaction, when he had confirm'd his *Successors* by linking in their Interests with his. He cunningly makes him the very *Guardian* of the Prince, whose *Crown* would never totter

on his Head, while he had so formidable a Person as *Abraham* to keep it on; who had made *Four Kings* to flie before him: Therefore by this Oath is, *Abimelech* and his *Heirs* secured both against *Abraham* himself, (whose growing Greatness he might justly fear) so against all others by his means. Thus had God caused the Dread of *Abraham* to fall on the whole Court and Kingdom of *Gerar*: *Kings* and *Generals* fall low before him, and Devote themselves to him, while he the more humbly bows to his God, and under all the Courtships of *Crowned Heads*, Remembers that his own must stoop to the *Dust*.

Abraham who had before stricken a League with Heaven, was not puffed up with a vain *Elation* of being a Confederate with a *King*, who ambitiously sought that Honour from him: The highest *Promotion on Earth*, cannot swell the mind that is closely united with God. All the benefit he draws from it, shall advantage the Kingdom, whom he blesses with his Presence, and *Five and twenty years* Residence in it. He had pitched his *Tent* at *Beresheba*, where he planted a *Grove* (and needs must the *Trees* thrive well, that are set by so good an hand.) *Jonathan* tells us, 'twas an *Orchard* of pleasant Fruits, wherein he made his *Oratory*, and took many a delightful walk with his God by Contemplation and Prayer; here also he used to entertain his *Guests* that visited him, making themselves more happy by his Company than his Cheer (which yet was ever such as spoke the great Heart of a generous *Abraham*) from whom they never departed without Invitation to take share with him of a greater *Felicity* in Heaven,
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always plying them with such prevailing Arguments from his endearing Lips, as made many of them hunch away their unprofitable *Idols*, to make room for the Worship of the *True God*. Mark Reader, what a bulie Trade is the great *Abraham* driving on for the glorious *Eternity*; does he live to himself in the Affluence and abundance of all his Riches and Honours? Are his Aims, or the Ends of his Life any other, than such as tend to the glory of his God, and the good of Souls? Even *Pagans* and *Infidels* flock in to him, to embrace his Kindness and Counsells together; they are Courted and Feasted into his Religion, his very courtesies *Convert* them, they cannot but be convinced that *Abraham's* God must be the only *True one*, who had polished him up into all the perfections of a sweet *Nature*, and such ravishing *Grace* that dragg'd all the World after it, and envasal'd all his *Admirers*, and should they not be perswaded by him, *neither would they, should one come to them from the Dead.*

CHAP. X.

Isaac's *Immolation*.

WHile *Abraham* is thus passing away his Days in a constant Course of Pleasant and Profitable Duty, God is contriving to employ him in a Service that shall render the Honour of his *Obedience* more Eximious and Renowned than all he had hitherto done; to keep
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on and trace the *High way* of vulgar and ordinary Duty, is the work of every common *Professour*: But *Abraham* shall do that at the command of God, which none but an *Abraham* could do *besides*, and what all the World shall admire him for, till *Time* it self shall be no more. By *Nine* Tryals already had God experimented the Integrity of his Loyal Heart; yet (as if all these were nothing) a *Tenth* shall follow, the Bitterest of them all: If *Abraham's* Faith hold out in this, Heaven and Earth shall know how worthy he is of the Favour and Goodness of God, and how entirely he had observed the Conditions of the *Covenant*, that obliged him to pay an *universal* Respect to all his Commandments, how Severe and *Difficult* soever; let us see with what *Gallantry* of Spirit he will acquit himself in this last and greatest Encounter.

'Twas but a little while, since he had parted from a Son at the *Command* of God, yet that loss (tho' very grievous) was made up to him by *another*, which was dearer to him at Home. But now comes a *Second Summons*, for This also, who must pass, not out of his *House* only, but *Life*; and (which was yet more afflicting) by his own *Hands*. Take now thy Son, thine only Son *Isaac*, whom thou lovest, and get thee to the Land of *Moriah*, and Offer him there for a *Burnt-offering* upon one of the *Mountains* that I will tell thee of: Behold all the many Promises of God, and all the many hopes and comforts of *Abraham's* Life, perfectly cut off and destroyed at one Blow. Strong were the *Heart-strings* of *Abraham* that could hold out from *Cracking* at the breaking out of the First syllables of this Killing Command; but could he

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live so long as to hear out the whole *Sentence*? The *Rabbins* fancy; that God himself doubted it, and therefore have feigned, that God to give him a breathing time, brake it in pieces by many Abruptions, framing it into a *Dialogue*; Wherein God is made to begin: *Abraham take thy Son*; To which *Abraham* Answers, I am ready, Lord, (well hoping it might have been *Ishmael*,) But which of my Sons doest thou call for, for I have two? *Abraham* yet little daunted, God replies to him, *Thine only Son*; To whom *Abraham* again (not willing to understand it of *Isaac*) *Each one of them is the only Son of his Mother*: Nay but (saith God) *The Son whom thou lovest*: This touches close: To whom therefore pantingly, Lord thou knowest that I love them both; God to end the dispute is fain to discriminate; 'Tis *Isaac* thine only Son whom thou lovest, thou must take him: But whither Lord must I carry him? To the Land of *Moriah*; And what to do with him there? Offer him up for a *Burnt-offering*: Is the old Man alive? If so let him live for ever. May we carry on the Dialogue a little without offence, to the Glory of *Abraham's* Obedience, who never so much as opened his Mouth in the least to dispute the will of God: Lord, How long have thine Altars thirsted for humane Blood? I have Offered up many a Sacrifice before, which have pleased thee well: Will nothing satisfy thee now but the Blood of my Child? Take I say thy Son; Each *Infidel* can offer up the Blood of Beasts to their Deities, but thou must exceed them all in the Sacrifice of thine own Child, to thy God. But Lord, if nothing less than humane Blood will suffice, may

not *Isaac* be exchanged for a Slave, or as many of them as thou shalt please to call for? No, the Blood of Slaves is a slender Offering to that of thine own Son, 'tis *Isaac* himself must Bleed and be the Victim. If then mine *Isaac* must die, will no hand content thee to Offer him but mine own? with what Heart shall I be able to Sacrifice mine own Child? Nor will I favour thee in this, 'tis thine own hand must give the fatal stroke. Behold I have taken upon me to speak to the Lord: What will become of thy Great Name, when the very Heathen shall hear that *Abraham's* God requires so unnatural a Sacrifice as this? Fear not, for mine Honour is not subjected to the censures of Men, who can raise up a Glory to my self, by the Sacrifice of them all to my Justice. O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but this once; by whom shall *Jacob* arise, if *Isaac* be cut off, and what shall become of thy Truth and Covenant to thy poor Servant? Shall thy Faithfulness, and Promises fail for evermore? 'Tis I that visited *Sarah*, and gave her a Son when she laughed in despair, and once thou believedst against Hope; Is mine hand shortned that it cannot save? May I not raise up another *Isaac* unto thee, or do means fail me to accomplish all my Promises, are they confin'd all to the life of this Son; Arise therefore and Take him, &c.

Let the base World blush and be confounded that hath learned to Quarrel and wrangle with every trivial Precept of God that crosses their Ease and Interest, or seems but a little to break in upon their Carnal Hopes and Confidences; When they see the Great *Abraham* paying an humble and undisputed Obedience to such an Injunction

as lets out the life Blood of all his Joyes and Comforts on Earth. God had made with him an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure: This is all his desire and all his Salvation, although he should not make his House to grow. Who can see Him rising early to whet the Sacrificing knife that must cut the Throat of his beloved Isaac, and giving orders for the cleaving the Wood, that must afterwards Burn his dearest Body into Ashes, and hastening his Son and Servants to the Journey? The Lord hath a Sacrifice to be Offered on the Mount of Moriah; how is This Righteous Soul straitned, untill it be fulfilled! Who can see him thus busie in the Annihilation of his own Flesh, without believing that his Affections were all ravished away into Heaven, and that Divine Grace had absorp'd him to that degree, that he seems to have little of Man or Father appearing in him. As Levi, he knows not his own Children, but packs away the one into Banishment at the Command of God, and the other into Death. So wholly eaten up by divine Zeal, that for three whole days together (Travelling towards the fatal Mount) he hath both his Eyes so intently fixt on the holy Commandment, that he doth not so much as glance on his Isaac, whom he Devotes unto Good, and looks on him as nothing but Ashes already. The Law of his God, (that by this Command had dispensed with the very Law of Nature) was so strong upon his Heart, that he becomes obediently Unnatural and Cruel, not in the least repining as Jacob against God; Me hast thou bereaved of my Children, Ishmael is not, and wilt thou take Isaac also? all these things are against me.

Not so much as pouring out one Prayer to revoke the dreadful Injunction: *Father if it be possible, let this Cup pass away.* But totally resigning Himself, with his Blessed Heir: *Let thy will and not mine be done.* O Holy Abraham, how Illustriously do the Graces of Him shine forth upon thee, that would be *Nothing* else than what he was unto God! Thou art that *Righteous Man* of the East, that hath learned to fall down and lye thus Submissively at the *Foot of God*: Whither shall we go in *Pilgrimage* to find out the least Track of thine Obedient Steps; there is scarce a little Line of thy *Miraculous* Devotion left upon the Face of the Earth.

Though St. *Austin* and some few more are pleased to give *Sarah* the Honour of consenting to the Death of her Son at the Will of God, yet others more generally deny it; and that *Abraham*, afraid that her Faith might be drown'd in the *Flood* of her *Passion*, very prudently conceal'd the Divine *Mandate* from her till after the Execution, (and that possibly he might bring her back a Son preternaturally raised out of his own *Ashes*; for his God was *Almighty*.) In vain should he occasion a Precipitation of her Sorrows, the woful Tidings would fall too soon as a *Talent* of *Lead* to crush and break her miserable *Heart*. 'Tis *Abraham* alone hath that *Masculine* Spirit to bear up under so sinking an Affliction as this.

Nor doth the *Appearance* of the fiery *Mountain*, upon which his Son must be Offered, dismay him: *David* (piteously lamenting the Fall but of a Friend) bitterly execrated the *Gilboa* that

that had suckt in the Blood of his *Jonathan*, devoting it to the *Curse of Heaven* for ever: But *Abraham* can view the place where the Fire must consume his dearest *Child*, and yet with *Aaron hold his peace*. And now, what his Faith assures him will be acceptable to God, his Fear tells him may not be so very Grateful to Men. He prudently dismisses the Servants, whose Eyes and Hearts (he thinks) would not serve them to view what his own unhappy Hands must *Act*: He desires no Witnesses of so Tragical a Sacrifice. 'Tis enough that he who had set him on the Work (and could not but See him) should Sign the *Certificate* of his Faithful Obedience and Service. While he Approves himself to God, he values not the *Testimony* of Men: He cries not as *Jehu* to *Jonadab*, *Come see my zeal for the Lord*. Some fancy that he left them behind, least (when they should see him doing what he must do) they might think that he had left his *Wits* behind him, and so might hinder him of his Duty (as once the Good Meaning Friends of *Jesus* did him) on pretence of *Distraction* and Want of Senses. It was not improbable, but these young Men might have obstructed his *Offering*, from as Ardent Zeal to their young Master, as those afterwards who rescued *Jonathan* (Sworn to Death) from the Hands and *Oath* of his Violent Father. But *Abraham* will not be interrupted by Men, in a Duty which is commanded him by God. If he himself will cut the *Cords* of the *Sacrifice*, and his *Isaac's Redemption* be wrought by the same *Authority* from Heaven that his *Death* was imposed, most happy

should he think himself; but no other Hand shall take him from the *Altar*, than the Divine one that laid him on. Whence then is His *Authority*, who pretends a Power to Dispense against the *Positive and Absolute Commands of God*?

The *Servants and Beasts* are disburthened, while the whole *Load* is laid upon *Isaac*; the *Son* is oppressed and the very *Slaves* go free, yet he *Murmurs* not: Who Sees not here those *Innocent Shoulders* that once bore our *Griefs* and carried our *Sorrows*? The *Iniquity of us* all was laid upon him, yet he opened not his *Mouth*. Can we view *Isaac* bowing under the *Wood* that is design'd to devour him, and not behold our dearest *Saviour* Fainting under the weight of his own *Cross*, both ascending by weary *Steps* the very same *Mount*?

Abraham and *Isaac*, the Holy and the Spiritual; these tug with difficulties, and attain to *Mount Sion* the City of God, while the *Carnal* and the *Brutish* lag below, and perish in the Valley of *Darkness* and *Death*, where no *Sacrifice* is offered by them, none is accepted for them, *their Iniquity is not purged by any offering* for ever.

Nor is there any true Son of *Abraham*, but who (in this Life) divides *Himself*; the *Brutish* Part is left behind here below, while the *Aspiring* Soul climbs the *Hill* to meet with God, and doth so effectually prevail with him there, that hereafter the poor *Dust* shall be called up too, and participate of those Divine *Qualities* that will fit it for so Glorious a *Communion*.

The *Ascent* to the Mount, was the most difficult part of the whole Journey, and strong is the *Body* that bears up it Self against its Proclivity and Steepness: Yet must not *Isaac* be pitied, but instead of *ease* hath an heavy *Burthen* heaped upon him by a Father that tenderly loves him, with design it may be to make him weary of the World, and more willing to dye and pass out of it, while the Slaves and Brutes are at ease, and free from All below: If the Cares of Life that are common to all, are found too light to humble the dearest Children of God and keep them low; behold God hanging on them those Weights of *Affliction* that should make them more sensible of their *Pilgrimage Estate*, and cause them to Sigh for Redemption and Ease: Nor is he less a Father, because (with *Abraham*) he bears the *Knife* in one hand, that lets out the *Blood* of their dangerous Corruptions, and the *Fire* in the other that is to burn up their Combustible *Lusts*, since while they Groan Himself is Afflicted, and under a seemingly Cruel Hand, doth ever retain a most gracious and compassionate Heart, which harbors no other purpose by the roughest *Wind* of his Fury, than the *fanning away their Iniquity*; themselves at last shall find this happy Fruit by the Storm, that it hath taken away nothing but *Sin*; though they know as little the end of Gods Proceedings, as *Isaac* did those of his Father, when he so Innocently put the question; *My Father, behold the Fire and the Wood, but where is the Lamb for a burnt Offering?*

Is *Abraham* become, as *Lot's* Wife, a Pillar of *Hardness* and *Insensibility*? Or was this a *Rebellious* Son, whom he delivers up to Justice and Death? Or why do we not see him staggering under the weight of so killing a Temptation as this: That no doubt pierced deeper into his very Soul, than the first Command of God? No, if *Abraham* could have melted at all, it had been when this hot *Gleam* beat so strongly upon his Heart. *Isaac* cannot forget that he is Blessed in so dear a Father as *Abraham*, though *Abraham* must forget that he was once Blessed in so dear a Child as *Isaac*: He must learn to answer neither to the Name nor the Nature of a *Father*. It evidently shews us, with what Care *Abraham* had stifled all his Grievs within his own Bosom, that he had not hitherto so much as let fly a *Sigh* or *Groan* unstrangled, that might survive to give Intelligence to *Isaac*, that there was no other *Sacrifice* to be expected than *Himself*.

A Frantick Outragiousness under Sufferings, is but digging into the Wound, and causing it to bleed at a wider *Orifice*, when silent Submission makes half the *Plaster* that heals it up. If it be the good Pleasure of Heaven to clap Fetters upon us that we would not wear, while we madly strive to tear them off, we do but rend our own Flesh, and make the *Iron* to enter the deeper into our Soul. If the hard *Burden* of the Lord hath fallen upon *Abraham*, which would have sunk any but Himself into Death; what doth he but with holy *Job*, take it quietly on his shoulder, and bind it as a Crown to him. This heavy stroke from *Isaac's* Mouth (charg'd by God

him-

himself for a greater Tryal) and lighting upon the very Wound, is so far from moving him to let go his *Integrity*, that under the fresh Assault of this menacing *Billow*, he still swims above Water, and holds it fast.

Isaac is the Sacrifice that Himself calls for, and *Abraham* only knows it, though *Isaac* knows it not; yet God knew that he intended another, though *Abraham* knows it not: The *Son* is not kept in greater Darkness by the *Father*, than is the *Father* kept by *God*. How little does Man know of his own Concerns in the future Event of God's Decrees? Some pass merrily on, because they see not the Dangers that are before them, while others mourn under Jealousies of Troubles, that (God knows) shall never come upon them. The Prophecy shall come to pass indeed, and *God will provide another Sacrifice*.

Josephus hath adventured to Fancy the Arguments by which *Abraham* (now come to the Mount, having erected the Altar and made all things ready) prevailed with *Isaac* to surrender up his Life unto God. But I shall do my *Reader* no Injury, if I present him with another which the Golden Pen of our Excellent *Hall* hath drawn up to my hand, as despairing to find any where a more Natural or Powerfully Effectual than his.

“ My *Son*, thou art the *Lamb* which God hath
 “ provided for this *Burnt Offering*, if my Blood
 “ could have excused thee, how many thou-
 “ sand times had I rather to give thee mine *Own*
 “ Life, than taken thine: Alas! I am full of
 “ Days, and now of long time have lived not
 “ but

"but in thee. Thou mightest have preserved
 "the Life of thy Father, and have comforted
 "his Death, but the God of us both hath cho-
 "sen thee: He that gave thee unto me Mira-
 "culously, bids me by an unusual means return
 "thee unto him. I need not tell thee that I
 "Sacrifice all my Worldly Joys, yea, and my
 "Self in thee; But God must be obeyed. Nei-
 "ther art thou too Dear for him that calls
 "thee. Come on my Son, restore the Life that
 "God hath given thee by me; offer thy self
 "willingly to these Flames, Send up thy Soul
 "cheerfully unto thy Glory, and know that God
 "loves thee above others, since he requires thee
 "alone to be Consecrated in Sacrifice to Him-
 "self.

Behold the very Figure of him that hath
 said, *I and my Father are One*; One in Nature
 and One in Will. *Isaac layeth down his Life of*
himself (with Jesus) and no Man taketh it from
him. He gives up himself with the same Resig-
 nation: *Lo I come to do thy Will, O God.*

Let us only Contemplate what Conflicts Young
Isaac endured in his Bosom, 'twixt the different
 Interests of Flesh and Spirit; what Strugglings
 'twixt Nature and Duty (for a while) as the
 different Twins in *Rebekah's* Womb; till recol-
 lecting his Spirits, and rousing up his Faith, he
 humbly addresseth his Dearest *Father* with such a
 Retortion as this.

"My Father, though *Nature* once framed into
 "Life grows kind and dear to it Self, and *Flesh*
 "is not easily perswaded to pass into *Nothing*,
 "if by any means it can preserve and maintain
 "its

"its own *Being*: And we see all the World
 "sticking in *Self*, and fast Bound to the pleasing
 "Enjoyments of the present *Life*: Yet the Son
 "of *Abraham* hath been Educated into better
 "Hopes, and hath been taught to *Obe*y but ne-
 "ver to *Dispute* the Commands of his Father's
 "God. Yes, Sir, your *Isaac* is ready to sur-
 "render up the *Life* he hath received; Seek not
 "for any other *Offering* than your own *Son*, who
 "is prepared to Bleed on the Holy Altar of God,
 "and approve himself the Obedient *Child* of
 "so Good a *Father*, by whose excellent example
 "he hath learn'd to Resign up his All to his
 "Maker.

See the patient *Victim* kissing the *Cords* that
 bind him, and the fatal *Knife* that is sharpned
 to let out his *Blood* and *Life*, while his Father
 inwardly Bleeds more *Drops* than he, and hath
 just Strength enough left to lift up his trembling
 Hand to give the *Mortal Stroke*, which Heaven
 never design'd that *Isaac* should feel or suffer:
Real Intention weighs as heavy in the Ballance of the
Sanctuary as the best Action: Thou doest well Abra-
ham, in that it was in thine heart to build this Tem-
ple unto God: Which though uneffected, shall re-
fect an equal Honour upon thee.

When God called young *Samuel*, he arose and
 went to *Eli*, for as yet he knew not the voice of the
 Lord. But Old *Abraham* had been so long ac-
 customed to Celestial Sounds, that the Voice of
 an *Angel* could be no Surprize unto him. He
 that ever kept his Ears open to every Call of
 God, could not be Deaf to this *Musick* that
 ravish'd his Ear and Heart together. 'Twas a
 very

very Melancholly Note, *Take thy Son Isaac, and offer him up, &c.* But now the *Sphears* strike up a more melodious Tune, *Lay not thine hand upon the Lad.* Yet *Abraham* danced after both, but his very *Soul* makes a *Caper* at this. He that refused not God in the killing, very easily obeys him in the Sparing of his only Son: *Commands that Run counter to our Wills must all be received; but those that jump in with them are embraced with open Arms.* The glad Father stands not to argue the Authority that brings him a *Discharge* from the Execution of the first *Warrant*, but readily *Believes* what he heartily *Desires*, and knows that God himself is the best *Dispenser* with his own Statutes. *The Sheep of Christ that know his Voice*, are startled at the *Arrogance* of the *Stranger*, that presumes to countermand the plain *Injunctions* of Heaven. *Read the Scriptures*: No, they are dangerous: *Drink ye all of this*: No, not all, but the *Priest* only. *Pray with the Spirit and with Understanding*: No, but in an *Unknown Tongue*. *Marriage is honourable to all Men*: No, not in the *Sacerdotal Order*. *There is one Mediator, even Jesus Christ*: No, there are Innumerable others, *Angels* and *Saints*. This *Intercessor* is able to *save to the uttermost all that come to him*: No, not unless you joyn your own *Good Works* with him, which are *Filthy Rags, Dung* and *Nothing*. In vain doth *Diotrephes* prate against the *Divine* and *Infallible Spirit of Truth*: Lord, where will this *New Gospel* stand in the Great day?

You have heard the *Faith* and *Patience* of *Abraham*, now see the *End* of the Lord. Will any one think that *Isaac's Blood* could be profitable unto God?

God? yet shall *Abraham's* Obedience bring Him Glory, and be profitable to Himself and to the whole *Church* of God for ever; to teach us, that *Faith without Works is dead, and by works of Obedience is Faith perfected*: And both *Faith and Obedience* perfected by Grace through *Christ*.

Now hath God built a *Tabernacle* for the *Table* of his Covenant with *Abraham* to rest in to the end of the World; that all *Flesh* may know that he who refuseth to offer up his *Isaac* on *Abraham's* Altar, can never expect Salvation with him. God leaves such for *Moses*, and not this Angel to deal with, who came on purpose four hundred years after, with a killing Letter to those as spare their *darling* Sins from the command of God to have them *Crucified*; when *Abraham*, his Favourite, could not be suffered (and had more love to him than) to withhold his only Son. *Abraham* himself hath no Bosom for such as *hide their Iniquity in their own*. And 'tis observable, how little Compassion he had for the Man in *Hell*, that of Three Requests made by him, he granted him not one, and Torments him with the same Uncharitableness that himself had used to poor *Lazarus*: He should not have a *Drop*, that would not give a *Crum*. *Abraham* is the only *Saint* that we find prayed to in all the Scripture, and that to so little purpose, as the miserable *Supplicant* gets not the least *Ease* from his Pains, who had kept all his *Isaacs* about him on Earth, and now very idly becomes his *Votary* in Hell.

Mercy to *Sin* is Tyranny to the *Soul*; If *Absalom* be dealt gently with, and suffered to Live,

David

David himself is in danger to dye. Most Men take *David's* Care for the Rebels Safety, as if their own Life were bound up in the Life of him; when (if God be True) either Sin or the Soul must certainly dye. If we cannot part with our Lusts for Gods sake, we shall part with our Souls for our Lusts sake. Who, that is wise, but would harden himself against damning Corruption that lurks to destroy him. When *Abraham* hath a Courage for the sake of his God, to stick his Knife into the Throat, and to burn into Ashes his own Flesh, and would have thought himself unworthy of the Kindness of Heaven, had he refused that Obedience to the holy Commandment. If the Interest of God be so low in thine Eyes, that for Sins sake, That must suffer, take heed the Interest of thy Soul be not one day so low in Gods Eyes, that for Sins sake thy Soul may suffer for ever.

But if *Abraham's* Obedience and Love to God be grown quite out of Fashion, and Men fancy they may be saved on cheaper terms than He: Let them shew the Dispensation whereby they are allowed to spare their Beloved *Isaac*; since not *Abraham* only, but God Himself spared not His, and delivered him up a Sacrifice for those Sins whose safety Men so carefully provide for: Ah me! never considering that those they are so fond of, would not suffer the Son of God to live; 'twas Sin that brought him to his Death, and are the Sinners like to escape with life, when He Himself (that had none of his own) dyed, and was destroyed but for wearing the Garment that was spotted with the Flesh, tho
his

his Own were so pure and without Stain : Whence is it, that notwithstanding *Christ* hath dyed, so great a part of Mankind dye too and perish, but from this very Treason, they will not deliver up their *Lusts* to dye with him, but maintain a Friendship with those Enemies that destroyed him ; as if the same *Iron* that pierced his *Flesh*, would not one day enter into their own *Souls*, making wounds there that shall never be healed ; Nor will any thing make them rage with a greater Torment, than to consider, That God delivered up his Son, and that Son delivered up himself to free them from those cruel hands, which they will find too soon embrewed in the Blood of their Souls, tho they believe it not, nor will be perswaded to free themselves in time. Methinks they might pass to *Golgotha*, and see what bloody work *Sen* made on the blessed Body of an Innocent *Jesus* ; and can they think that *Justice* is become more Merciful to wilful and obstinate Offenders : 'Tis one of the Mysteries in Religion, that after God himself, the *Almighty* Father, hath bin prevail'd on by his own free and unexpressible Love, and Riches of Grace, to give out his Son (ten thousand times dearer to him than all the Creatures) from his holy Bosom, where he had lain from all Eternity, to be delivered up to bitter Sufferings and Death it self, for ungodly Enemies : And that after *Jesus* that blessed Son had yielded so readily to become the *Sacrifice* lying upon the *Altar*, and not as *Isaac* countermanded again, but actually *Bleeding* out his very Heart for them to the very last drop ; yet

yet when all this is done, and the Gates of eternal *Righteousness* and *Redemption* opened to all that will but humbly and thankfully enter them, the sottish World should stand at a distance, and look to be courted into a Compliance with those happy terms that would bless them into the Felicity of a perfect freedom from those Chains of Darkness that bind them over to an endless Captivity; Nay, to hugg those very Fetters, and and to fall in love with Bondage and Misery it self, and by no Arguments be wrought to embrace the purchased Safety: Whence is this unaccountable *Madness* but from the Devil, and that cursed Heart of unperswasibleness and Infidelity that detains them Prisoners to their own *Obstinacy*, with the same Obduration and Judgment of God, as that unhappy *Nation*, upon whom his wrath is come to the uttermost? Let such consider whether all the World, much less the poor Slaves of his Family could have tempted *Abraham* to have shed the Blood of his dearest Child; or with what offers could *Isaac* have been bribed to suffer that deadly Massacre, when only the Command of God revealed by his Father brought him to it? and shall not the Power of the same God prevail with thee to save thy self, by a little pains only in mortifying an unprofitable Lust or two? Shall this indulgent Father Kill a Son (in whom was all his earthly happiness,) at the will of God, and that Son as quietly lye still in a minutely Expectation of the destructive *Gash*, while he doth it from a pious Conformity to the same Will? Nay further, shall God Him-
self

self for such a *Slave* to Sin and Lust as Thou, lay hold on the dearly Beloved of his Soul, and most pitilessly suffer him to be Mangled and Torn, nothing all over but Wounds and Gore, and Himself all the while silent, and submissive? Not a murmuring Thought seizing on his heart, not a discontented Syllable passing his Lips, while he hath nothing to comfort him but the Remembrance of the Happiness that thy unsensible Self mayst reap from those *Sorrows*? When now after all this his very Passion is *Ridicul'd*, the whole *Process* lookt on but as *Story* and *Romance*: The *Stone* of his Sepulchre roll'd on thine own Heart, shutting thee up in *Unbelief*, and hardning thee to that degree, that nothing but murdering a second time will serve thy Turn; the *Jewish* Malice rekindled within thee, and thou art *Crucifying him afresh*, with the same Fury, driving in more Nails into his holy *Body* than ever did they, and giving him more bitter *Portions* to drink! The *Angel* from Heaven not hearkned to, when he cries to thee to spare *Isaac*. Blessed *Redeemer*! Is this the Fruit of thy Sacrifice! Did our true *Isaac* bleed for this? Was the Fountain of Life opened to gush out in so full a Stream, for no other end but to dam up the Current of Sin and Uncleaness, that it should not issue from us, but abide in us for ever? Was this the Mercy promised to our Father *Abraham*, That we should be delivered up into the hands of our *Enemies* (of whom Sin is the greatest) and not from them? Where is the blessing (so often repeated) of being turned away from *Iniquity*, if we conti-

nue for ever in it? How long hath *Jesus* been a Saviour from the *Guilt*, and not from the *Dominion* of Sin? Is he become favourable to the Thorns that pierced His Sacred *Head*, and the Spear that wounded his innocent *Heart*, that He can tolerate them in *Christian* Hands? In vain do Men think Him reconciled to these Traytors, because themselves give them harbour: When they know not how soon they may be surprized in the Guilt of that *Treason*, and made to suffer the Penalties of Eternal *Death* for it; either *Isaac* must be sacrificed, or themselves, for not doing it.

Abraham (by this) having given convincing Evidence of his perfect Integrity, and unreserved Devotion to the Divine Precept, God is so greatly Affected with it, that he cannot forbear from letting him know how very grateful this Eminent Service was unto him: He first sends him down *Letters Testimonial*, whereon he sets his *Seal* to the Truth of *Abraham's* Religion, (which all his true Heirs must imitate and follow) *Now I know that thou fearest God*, &c. Thou fearest God, and I know it, and all the World shall know it too, by what thou hast done, &c. And further, for his sake he will now be so very kind to confirm to *him* and *his* for ever, all the Mercies of his Gracious Covenant, with the unalterable *Ratification* of an *Oath*, which shall make it impossible to be broken, and as sure to them as Truth it self can make it: That as *Abraham* had been faithful to God in his Obedience and Duty to him; so it should be past all possibility for God himself

to fail in his Promises, or be unfaithful, that he should not perform the Mercies he had formerly engaged to grant them who should *walk in the same steps of Abraham's Faith and Sincerity*. By this Grace he opened his very Heart to shew them the *Immutability of his Council*, and Greatness of his Affections to them, with this advice, That they would draw from this *Living Well* the refreshing Draughts of *strong Consolation*: When they shall consider, That God must first cease to be, e're he be unconstant or faile in his purposes of shewing Kindness to them.

What a reviving Julip is this to the drooping Spirits of *Abraham's Children*! That all their Mercies are as secure to them as the very *Being* of God is to Himself! Every Link of the whole Chain of their Salvation so strongly *fixt*, that he seems not free from his *Oath* till they are Lodg'd in the same Kingdom with him, whither he hath so resolutely *sworn* to bring them. 'Tis a strange Faith that gives no Credence to the Oath of a God! *As I live saith the Lord, that in blessing I will bless thee, &c.*

Do but think, Reader, with what unspeakable Joy, the Soul of this holy Man overflowed, not only for the preservation of his Sons life, but the Attestation of his own Integrity, in that he had approved himself so faithful a Servant to his great Lord, in yielding up his *Isaac* so chearfully to his pleasure. Our enjoyments are doubled to us in sweetness, when they have been first Offer'd in Sacrifice by us, and we hold them only at his Devotion. In this *work of Righteousness*, he had *present peace*, and in the effects of it, *quietness*

ness and Assurance for ever. The same Comfort hath every Son of *Abraham* in the conscionable discharge of his Duty, with a sweet Testimony of divine Acceptation sealed to the Conscience by a ravishing voice from Heaven: *He that doth my Commandments, and loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest my self to him.* The obedient Soul shall not only be loved of God, but a manifestation of that Love shall be given into Him by the *Witnessing Spirit*. 'Tis Common in well doing, to hear ill from the World; but Who ever did well for God, that heard ill from him? The Lord will Create the *Fruit of the Lips, Peace and Joy*: While holy *Paul* triumphed in the Testimony of his Conscience, that gave him the Assurance of his Truth and Sincerity, how little did he value the censure of those that impudently branded him for a *Reprobate*! 2 Cor. ult. Let God himself draw up the Certificate of *Jobs* Integrity; *That there was none like him in all the Earth*: Yet will the very Devil undertake to disprove him in it, and his *Three Friends* are all drawn in to close with him, and by many Arguments labour to asperse him with the foul Imputation of *Hypocrisie*, till that mistaken Counterfeit is accepted only to pray away the guilt of that *Ignorance*, and then they look on him with the Eyes of God. 'Tis no matter how thick these *stones* of Persecution flie upon us, while with the *Protomartyr* the Heavens open to us, and our Eyes are blessed with the glory of *Jesus*. How little would *Abraham* have felt the smart of Reproaches from scandalous Mouths, whose Ears had heard that blessed *Encomium* from
God

God himself, *Now I know that thou fearest me!* Not but that God knew it before, but *Abraham* must know it too, that he might rejoicingly walk in the pleasant *light* of Gods Love and his own Integrity together. He that hath not passed *Abraham's* tryal, and given the same proof of Fidelity, cannot reasonably expect to feel the same reward of Joy.

Let no Man think himself free from a Temptation of the same *Magnitude*, since under the Gospel, not *Isaac* thy Son, but thou thy Self art called on, to be Sacrificed on the same *Mount*: And he is accounted unworthy to be a *Disciple*, that hates not his *Own* Life for the sake of his *Master*. The great *Saviour* hath abounded in *Votaries*, proud of the Honour of writing their Love in the Blood of their Hearts, and have been reduced into Ashes with as burning Affections to his Glory, and hath every where Those that hold their All at the only pleasure of his *Will*; and who can at all times pass not only into Poverty and loss of Estate, but also of *Life* for his Truth. *They loved not their lives to the Death*, and should they never be called to climbe the *Mount* and suffer the fatal stroke, yet since the Sacrifice is ready and the Hand lift up, God doth accept the *readymind*, and *Isaac* is Sacrific'd tho' yet alive: *He is dead for Christ on God's account, who is willing to die; 'tis the Heart and not the Blood that he requires.*

If *Isaac* the Fruit of the Body be refused, shall the *Ram in the Thicket* be taken? Will the Lord be pleased with Rams, with thousands of them? *Sacrifices and Burnt-offerings thou wouldest not*, but God him-

self will provide the *Sacrifice*, and prepare the *Body* of another Son of *Abraham* yet behind, he is the only *Lamb of God* that must take away the sins of the *World*; him will God accept, tho' *Isaac* be not taken.

In the despair of *Abrahams* Age must *Isaac* be called into *Life*, in the despair of his Hopes must he be saved from *Death*. When the *Knife* is at the throat of the whole Church, and Posts are every where flying with orders to give the *Blow*, then shall *Salvation* break out; *God* is seen in the *Mount* still. When all means of deliverance fail below, and his people brought into the extreamest streights, then doth enlargement come from himself, that all the *World* may know that *He* is *God alone*, and besides him there is no *Saviour*.

CHAP. XI.

Sarah's Death. Abraham's Purchase of a Grave for Her.

A *Brabam's Affections* were not so strongly rooted (as the *Trees* of his pleasant Grove) into the Soil of *Gerar*, but he can easily pluck them up, to be transplanted from *Beersheba* into his *Canaan* again. The Heart that is fixed unto *God*, doth ever hang loose from the *Earth*: It is he that makes all places a-like delightful to us by the *Gracious Shine* of his Presence; Fear not, *Jacob*, to go down into *Egypt*, for I will go with thee.

Abraham

Abraham who not long since enjoyed God in the *Mount*, and had the *Life* of a *Son* given him, must now as contentedly pass down into the *Valley of Tears*, and suffer the Death of a *Wife*. *Six and thirty years* enjoyment had God given her of the delight of her Heart, (she that so long had patiently waited for him, should not too hastily be hurried from him) but now must she pass from her *Abraham* and *Isaac* together, to the God of both. *The great Sarah dies*: Twice already had she been sent for, and taken from her Husband by *Kings*, but now (never to return more) she is once for all sent for to the King of *Heaven*, who provides her a place in his *Own*, till *Abraham* comes to lay her again in his *Bosom*. The *Angels* she had entertained in her *Tent*, give her welcome into *Glory*, and furnish her *Lodgings* suitable to the Quality of the Great Mother of all the *Faithful*, and *Wife* to the *Friend of God*. That all Generations may know what respect God himself bore unto *Sarah*, she alone of all her Sex hath the peculiar *Honour* to have her *Age* registred in the *Rolls of Heaven*; who notwithstanding all her Labour and Travel, ever moving from one *Nation* to another, from one *Kingdom* to another People, kept up an unwearied Courage and Faith, till God in Pity put an end to all her *Toils*, and sent her a *Writ of Ease* in the *Hundred twenty and Seventh* year of her Life.

Holy *David* hath well observed, that our whole *Life* is but as a *Tale* that is told; (and God knows the Lives of too many make up a very Inconsiderable and sad one.) This great *Lady*, the very *Mirrou* of *Women* and *Wives*, for her

incomparable Piety, unspotted Purity, unparallel'd Patience, exemplary Subjection, and incessant Perseverance in all, makes up an History, and when all the Memories of the great Princesses of the World are devoured by Time and buried in Oblivion; the smallest Circumstances of Her Life must survive them all, and Her story exactly Chronicled in the everlasting Volumes. Sarah may not laugh but all the World must know it; she may not pay her dutiful Respect to her Husband, by giving him his Title of Lord, but that Obedience must be recommended to the imitation of all her Daughters, above Two thousand years after, with a gracious design to keep up her Honour and Memory for ever.

Abráham receives the tydings of her Death with lamentable Resentment, and passes in a grave and solemn Procession into her Tent, (as the House of Mourning) to pay her the just Tribute due to the merits of so incomparable a Consort. There instead of a Wife he finds a Corps, whose cold Cheeks and wan Lips he bedews with his warmer Tears, which yet give some little ease to his heavy Heart from the oppression of that Grief that is ready to break it. Here the remembrance of all her Goodness and Vertues crowd in upon his Mind and Memory, which while he reflects on, (together with his own lots of them all) his Spirits are broken; the loss of his Friends and Country cost him not a Sigh, he hardened himself against the Fate of Isaac, but his dear Sarah's Death melts him into Water. The joyful sence of divine Grace doth not so perfectly banish away natural grief, but that the best of Saints, even Abrahám,

ham, and Jesus himself, under the Tyrannies of Fate shall find themselves subject to those Passions, as loudly speak them to be but Men.

Behold the great Sarah lying Dead, and the mighty Prince her Husband (acknowledged to be such by all the Chieftains of the Country where he dwells) not Proprietor of so much Earth, as shall suffice to Ground her Monument; nor is this so great a Wonder, when afterwards we find (his Heir) the Lord of all the Creation in the same condition, and obliged to a Friend to lend him a Grave. Who can date an Happiness to himself from his Interest in the Turf and Clod, when Jesus and Abraham have not so much Glebe in the World of their own, as to set a Foot on? How unlike to their Father were those degenerate Children of Abraham, who joyned House to House, and lay Field to Field, till there was no place for others, that they alone might be plac'd in the Earth! Isa. 5. 8. Doth it teach us nothing, that Abraham (so exceedingly Rich as he was) should never mind to purchase Land of Inheritance, but only for a Burying-place here in the Earth? He Sojourn'd in the Land of Promise, as in a strange Country, dwelling in Tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the Heirs with him of the same Promise. Why did he this, but because he looked for a City which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God? If we had Abraham's Faith, we should have Abraham's Spirit, as free and disengaged from the World as He: When, God knows, our Affections are so deeply Riveted into the Creature and pleasures of Life, that we have as little Will to mind the purchase of a Sepulchre, as he to buy an Inheritance amongst Men. Indeed
the

the whole Kingdom was his own in *Reversion*, and surely secur'd to his Children; while his own Faith was Estate enough, with the Promise of God for Himself to live on. While we was Travelling on, keeping Heaven in his Eye, he had no leisure to think of a poor settlement in the Earth. 'Twas not for Pilgrims to wait on Building, whose *affections* were no deeper stak'd to the World, than the slender *Pillars* of their movable *Tabernacles*, which they lightly pluck up with ease and hast to follow the conduct of that gracious *Providence* that ever so faithfully led them; they little minded *Palaces*, who were themselves nothing else but the goodly *Habitations* of God upon Earth, to whom he therefore retired so often, with the sweetest Assurances of their Interest in a City of his own Raising, where he attended their Company with him, and came down so frequently but to see whether they were ready for it.

Indeed it was not the design of God that *Abraham* should fix any where long, whom he intended to make a publick Blessing every where, and therefore being always ordered to remove upon every *Call* of God, it was requisite that his *Estate* should have *Wings* too, and be ready to *Fly* with Himself into every Countrey where God had Business for him to do: Nor was this the least Diminution to him, but rather an Increase of his *Grandeur*; since all Motions of *Princes* bear the greater *Majesty* from the splendid Appearance that attends them: you might have seen his Royal *Pavilion*, grac'd with the *Flagg* of Honour waving in the Air, surround-
ed

ed by Those of his *Sons* and *Servants* at an awful distance: The *Waggon*s of his *Ammunition* guarding those of his *Treasure*, while the numerous *Flocks* of his *Cattel* and *Herd*s feed round about him securely, and the *Trained Bands* of his *Houshold* standing by turns as *Sentinels* over all: Not to mention the invisible *Troops*, who as *Tutelars* gave their constant Attendance upon him, and ever adjoyn'd him as his *Guard*. The *Kings of the Earth* knew well enough that God was with him as a sure *Refuge*.

In this Glorious Estate was *Abraham*, when his *Lady* left it All to be translated into better. She passes from one Heaven below to another Above; from the Courts of *Princes* to the Palace of a *God*: Her Earthly Part was the care of *Abraham* to provide for: He will not meanly dispose of the *Cabinet*, wherein so precious a *Jewel* for so many years hath had its Lodging: An Honourable Interment is equally *Abraham's* Duty, and *Sarah's* due.

There was a *Cave* in the Field of *Machpelah*, (now in the possession of *Ephron* the *Hittite*,) which pleased him well, he had cast his Eye upon it, (not as *Ahab*, covetously Sick for *Naboth's* Vineyard) but as a convenient Purchase, if the Good-will of the Right Owner shall please to favour his Innocent desires of Appropriating it to himself by his *Money*: And now that he had present need of it, he is forced to make use of those honest means, that with greatest Probability may succeed to his Wishes and want. He Convocates the Neighbouring Heads of the Countrey (*Ephron* being one,) whom with a Gravity

Gravity mixt with Majesty, he Addresses to this Effect.

"I freely acknowledge it the Natural Right
 "of the *Lords* of the Countrey to Grant Liberty
 "to Strangers to make Purchases in their
 "Land. I am a Stranger among you, and
 "must declare my thankful Resentments of
 "that Kindness which hath permitted me so
 "free and peaceable *Cohabitation* with you. It
 "hath pleased God to Call away my *Wife* from
 "the World, for whose *Sepulture* I must make
 "some Provision, and it will not be long e're
 "I my self shall follow Her. This is only my
 "Request to you, that I may have Liberty to
 "purchase a *Burying*-place with you, where we
 "may rest in Death with the same Quiet and
 "*Peace*, as we have continued amongst you in
 "Life.

To the Reproach and Confusion of our more
 Ill-Natur'd and *Paganish Christians*, let us take
 notice with what Civility and Condescension
 these *Heathens* fram'd their courteous Replication
 to him.

Hear us, my Lord, Thou art a mighty Prince among
 us, and we know that God is with thee. We
 have no Power or Will to deny thy desires :
 Make thine own Election, in the choicest of our
Sepulchres bury thy Dead : None of us shall withhold
 his Sepulcher from thee, but that thou mayst bury
 thy Dead.

While Real Piety in all its Services aims on-
 ly to bring Glory to God ; He, in a gracious
 Compensation of so good Intention, makes that
 Honour to beat back on it self. God is honou-
 red

red by *Abraham*, and *Abraham* is honoured by God: There is no Man that gives his *Heart* unto him, but who shall find it again in the *Hearts* of others; The surest way to secure the Affections of *Men*, is first to devote our own unto God.

Prince Abraham will not receive this Complement without giving Demonstration to them, That he is not more *High* in Estate than *Humble* in Spirit: He arises, and makes them a Gentle Bow, in Acknowledgment of their great *Civility* and *Kindness* to him in that Offer: Yet while they were all so courteous, 'twas *Ephron* alone that must gratifie his desires, and all the Kindness the rest can do him, was but to Intercede for him, that on valuable consideration his *Field* and the *Cave* in it might be secured to him and his Heirs for ever. --- But when the brave *Hittite* perceives himself concern'd in *Abraham's* Choice, and that *He* only hath the desired *Cave* that must be honoured in becoming the *Repository* of these precious *Ashes*; how proudly doth his Liberality contest with *Abraham's* Justice, and is hardly conquer'd from Resolutions of giving that *Freely*, which *Abraham* desires only at a Price. What pity is it that sweet *Disposition* and *Generosity* should go to Hell, while fordid *Niggardliness* and base *Selfishness* hope for Heaven! Can bare *Nature* so easily depart from her Rights on Earth, which hath no pretence for others in Heaven, while those who pretend an Interest there, have their very *Souls* cleaving to the *Dust* below, and their feet sticking fast in the *Mire*; are so far from yielding up the least shadow

shadow of a Title to what they have of their Own, that they greedily invade and flye upon the *Properties* of Others: *Abraham* tho he minds not to accept the noble proffer ; yet is so greatly affected with it, that once again he repeats his grateful Sence of *Ephron's*, and all their Reverence towards him, by an yet more humble Obeysence than before. *He bowed himself down before the people of the Land.* Who can see this *Great Prince*, and *Friend of God*, twice together paying his Duty of civil *Respect* and Honour to the very *Heathen*, by the External Demonstrations of it, without pity towards those Rude and Unmannerly Professors of our Age, whose very *Religion* hath no other *Test of Distinction* but *Surliness* and *Inhumanity*.

Abraham while he is treating about a *Grave*, takes great Care that he may lye down in it with a peaceable *Conscience* : He hath been hitherto a mighty Pattern of *Holiness* in all his Transactions with God : Here we shall find him an Example of *Righteousness*, in all his Affairs with *Men* : That all his Children may know that Commutative *Justice* and the Duties of the *Second Table* were written by the same hand that will require as exact *Observation* of them, as of all the other of the *First*. In vain do we pretend *Sanctity* to God, if we are not *Righteous* to Men. *He that doth Righteousness is of God, and he that loveth his Brother.* See how Strait the *Lines* of *Abraham's Righteousness* run thro' all the management of this Compact with *Ephron*.

First, He will by no means take advantage of his Neighbours Good Nature against his Profit ;
he

he will neither defraud him, nor suffer him to defraud himself by an easie Disposition. *Hear me, I pray thee, I will give thee money for the Field, take it of me, &c.*

Secondly, When he hath the equitable Value of the Land set to him, he undervalues it not, in hopes to beat down the Price: *It is Naught, it is Naught, saith the Buyer; but when he is gone his way he boasterh.*

Thirdly, He makes present Payment for what he Buyes, and purchases not with Paper and Wax: *Abraham weighed out the Silver, &c.*

Fourthly, He Buyes not Good Land with Bad Coin; but all is *Currant Money with the Merchant.*

Lastly, The *Conveyances* are Sealed, and Witness taken, to prevent all Causes of future Debate: *The Field was made sure unto Abraham in the presence of the Children of Heth, and before all, &c.*

And now is *Abraham* as pleased with a *Grave*, as ever was Prince of a *Palace*: How many Mens *Estates* are their *Graves* while they live, and never think of another. Their very *Souls* are buried in their *Acres* below, wherein if they might, they would lye for ever. They Live and Rot in their Pleasures, and are *Dead* while they seem to Live: *Life to any thing but God, is but very Death.*

This is the only Joynture that we find ever settled upon *Sarah*, which the *Heirs* of her Body, against their coming to Age, shall find enlarged into a *Kingdom*, for by the purchase of this little Field, which cost not much more than *Two and twenty*

twenty Pounds or thereabouts, he had given Security to the Faith of his *Posterity*, That God would one day give them the *Inheritance* of that whole Land, where *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, with *Sarah*, *Rebekah* and *Leah*, lay close together to keep possession for them until themselves should come: And sure there is a better Security given to us also by his Great *Heir*, *Jesus Christ*, who is gone before us, and entred into the Heavens as a *Forerunner* to prepare places for us: *That where he is, we may be also.* And is not his Spirit lying *Leiger* in us, as the *Earnest* of our *Inheritance* until the *Redemption* of the purchased Possession, to the praise of his *Glory*.

'Tis observable, That after *Sarah's* Death, God makes no more Appearances to *Abraham* from Heaven, having now performed the Great Promise of a *Seed*, he leaves him to walk in the Light and Comfort of those he had already made: To teach us that the Great *Heir* being now come into the World (in whose coming all the Promises are perfectly secure to the Faithful) the Church is not to expect any Extraordinary *Revelations* of any farther *Truths* than what he hath already sent into the World by his *Son*. He hath now sealed up the whole *Canon*, and will hereafter be silent for ever. To these received, we ought to trust, in the Hope of these we ought to Live, in the Comfort of these we ought to dye. For this cause God in the close of his whole *Book* hath carefully contrived the Prevention of Alterations, Additions or Diminutions, by the *Menace* of an Eternal *Curse* impossible on that Guilt; and the multiplying Plagues upon

upon Him that shall add any thing to it: There being enough *Written* (if well believed) to make us Blessed and Happy for ever.

C H A P. XII.

Isaac's Marriage.

FOR *Three* full years together had *Isaac* mournfully lamented the Death of his Mother, now will God make up that loss to him in a Wife. *Eliezer* the Steward of his Fathers House is dispatched as *Legate* (with an *Angel* Attendant) into *Mesopotamia*, and takes with him his Masters Orders, where and from whom to choose him a Daughter. *Abraham* before his Journey Swears him to Fidelity in an Affair of so grand Importance, and he as cautiously Swears, that he might the more Religiously keep his Oath. When he draws near the place, he Invokes his Masters God for Prosperity and good Success, and begs that the first *Match* may be made up between the *Decrees* of Heaven and his own Endeavours, that they might not thwart each other, but happily Marry together. He humbly resigns up his own Discretion to the wise Council of God, which he knew had determined already in the fittest Choice of a Wife for so great a Prince as *Isaac*. He knew that *Marriages* were made in Heaven: Let her whom thou hast appointed, &c. His Prayer is no sooner made than granted. Those drive on heavily, where God knocks off

the *Wheels* of Expedition, but where Himself is in the Course, the *Chariot* flees like that of *Aminadab*. *Abraham* might have taken his Choice of all the Princesses of *Canaan* for his Son; but behold here a Woman with a *Pitcher* on her Shoulder, is ordained to make his Daughter! Hath not God chosen the Poor of this World, Rich in Faith, to make a Spouse for his own Son? We Note not the Meanness of *Rebekah's* Family, (the same with *Abraham's*) but the Simplicity and Innocency of those early Times in the plain Education of their Children, when *Pride* and *Idleness* ruins our own. *Eliezer* is so far from liking her the worse, that her *Humility* was the only Virtue that recommended her to him, and the Woman that could be so courteous and lowly to draw Water for himself and his *Camels*, is a concurrent Evidence from Heaven to his own judgment, of the best Wife for his Young Master. While the Dainty Fingers of our Ladies muffle themselves from *Rebekah's* Pitcher and *Rachel's* Crook; God thinks them unworthy to be promoted into the Beds of *Isaac* and *Israel* in the Family of *Abraham*. 'Tis the humble *Mary*, that (in the rejection of all the Proud Princesses of the World) is called to the everlasting Honour of drawing out her Breasts to a God. *Eliezer* makes the first Attack upon *Rebekah's* Heart by a Charge of Jewels, and Manacles her Arms and Affections together. Now is the House and all in it too little for him, into which she runs (as his Prisoner) with the Chains on, little yet thinking that within a day or two she should be drawn out of it by the Man whom she calls her Brother to lead in. The diligent

Servant

Servant will receive no Entertainment, till he knew whether his *Message* may not be as welcome as his *Person*. 'Tis not enough that he comes from *Abraham*, unless he may go away with *Rebekah*. He politickly takes the course of the World, and first presents them with an *Inventory* of his Great Masters *Estate*. He thinks that the Argument of *Riches* will prevail more than that of *Consanguinity*, and he *Doubles* it to them, when he truly tells them that all was given him of God. His *Gold* would wear like *Iron*, without the Canker of a *Curse* upon it: And to all he adds this, That the Excellent Person he woes for, is the *Sole Heir* of all: And in conclusion, intréats the result of their Thoughts, and that they might come to some speedy Resolution.

So good a *Motion* as this, requires no long time for *Consideration*, unless they purpose to deliberate to their own disadvantage. They could not mend themselves any where in all the World, and therefore they think it *Prudence* to come off Frankly, and yield up a ready Consent. They plainly perceive a Divine Providence in the Motion, and will not oppose the *Holy Will* and *Wisdom* of God: Behold *Rebekah* is before thee, take her and go, &c. The Hearts of Men are in the Hands of God, therefore *Eliezer* humbly bows in Thanksgiving to the God that had bowed them. The Good *Servant* had learnt this holy *Practice* from his *Old Master*, that was ever falling down before his *Maker*. Not a word all this while of any Portion, 'tis a *Wife* that *Abraham* requires for his Son, not *Money*. Mat-

ters thus Auspiciously concluded, the Presents are delivered, first to the *Bride* and then to her *Friends*: This was the laudable Custom of Antiquity. *Rebekah* by these Jewels may judge beforehand what a well-furnished *Closet* she will find at home. All Parties are satisfied, *Mirth* and *Joy* refresh their Hearts, while they eat and drink together in Love. *Eliezer* (as a good Servant) urges dispatch, while they plead for *Ten days time* to take leave of their *Sister*. The Controversie at length is referred to *Rebekah* her self, who modestly yields her assent to the *Stewards* Request. She is dismissed with her *Nurse* and *Maids*, and a Thousand Prayers to attend them. While we leave them a little on the Journey, let us take notice how happy she is like to be in an *Husband*.

Isaac's Holy Mind was not so vainly carried away with the pleasing Conceits of *Marriage*, that should cause him to neglect the Remembrance of his Duty to *God*: *Piety is the sure Ground of every Blessing*; *He builds aright indeed, that layes his foundation in Heaven*. The World is but a tottering *Basis*, that hath buried the Greatest Families in Ruine. Blessed is the Heart that is first *Married* to Christ, and from the *Crowd* of Distractions here below, makes very frequent Retreats to keep up a daily Converse with the Spiritual *Husband*, who is not so Strange or Unkind, but will give it a Meeting at any time, and manifest Himself to it: *Thou Lord meetest him that rejoyceth in thee*. We are assured he will not fail drawing near to those that draw near to him. This was the Heavenly Practice

Practice of *Isaac*, the Holy Son of so Blessed a Father, whose Soul was ever filled with God. What a lovely Draught of his Devotion hath the Divine Pencil presented to our Eye. *Isaac* went out to meditate in the Fields in the Evening. Meditation is the Souls pitching on some Branch of the *Tree of Life*, where it sits viewing its own Happiness, and chirping out Praises to God the Author of it. Next to *Abraham*, no Man living had a more pleasant Prospect of sweeter Objects than *Isaac* to contemplate. Heaven and Earth was but one Field for his unlimited Soul to walk in: From the lower *Terraces* here in the World (without the help of his Sons Ladder) might he mount up to the the *Turrets* above, and Feast his Eyes with the Glories of *Paradise*. He was equally Heir of both *Canaan's*, confirm'd to him by the very Oath of God. Could he want Subject then for holy Meditation, or Praise, or Comfortable Matter for his busie Thoughts to work on? *Thoughts* are the Issues of the Mind, that Prolifick Parent, whose *Children* are all of one Nature with it self, and never differ in Quality from it: If that be *Terrestrial*, so are They; but if Holy, they cannot be *unclean*, and should they prove so, they are with *Ishmael* cast out: There is no lodging for them in *Abraham's* House.

Behold *Isaac's* Pious Exercise (like an *Antiquated Custom*) grown quite out of Use: The Defection of the Old World come upon us. *All the Imaginations of the Heart* (for the greatest part of Men) evil, and only evil, and that continually: God is not in all their thoughts. He by

whom we have the Power and Faculty of *Thinking*, quite forgotten: The very Cream of our Souls leaking out in full Streams after *Vanity*, and nothing left for God; *Ephraim feedeth on Wind*. But hath the Christian no better fare to Feast on? Hath God spread all the Treasures of his unsearchable Grace, and laid them before him, to make his own Choice, and to take them all to himself? Is *this price in his hand* to be happy for ever, and hath *the Fool no heart to it*? Is the Everlasting Charter fairly Copied out, and sent him down from above to peruse and read over, wherein he finds all the Priviledges of Heaven and Earth made over and secured to him, and all this not worthy reflecting on: And the Book lying as fast clasped up as his own Heart? See how grievously God takes this Affront to his Goodness. *I have written to him the great things of my Law, but they were counted as a strange thing*: A matter not concerning them at all. The Feast is prepared, and all things ready, themselves Invited, but they *make light of it*, they have other Pleasures to follow! O Judicial Blindness! O cursed Insensibleness! *Israel would none of me, so I gave them up unto their own hearts lusts, to walk in their own Counsels*. He that hath no Heart for God, may jealously fear that God hath no Heart for him. *Pray not for this People, for my mind cannot be towards them*. Why? Their Heart is turned away from me: Yet is this but the first Seething of the deadly Poyson, see it boiling up into the heighth of a mutual Abhorrency and Loathing. *Their Soul abhorred me, and my Soul loathed them*. Tremble to think on the fatal

tal Effects of thy Hearts aversion from God : 'Tis a perfect *Predamnation*, the very Devils arrive at no greater height of Impiety : And thou that wilt not meditate *Love*, mayst shortly meditate *Terror*, and become a *Magor Missabib*, a very *Fiend* to thine own Self : Go miserable Creature ! sit in the Dust, lye on the Ground, cloath thee with Ashes, put on Sackcloth, let bitter Tears be thy drink ! Abhorr thy Self ! Thy Soul is departed from God, and God (as from *Saul*) is departed from thee, and what wilt thou do in the end thereof ? On what will thy miserable Thoughts feed on to Eternity ? 'Twere a Judgment to pass one day without *Meditation* on God ! but how wilt thou spend an endless Life without him ? which yet thou canst not do, while all thy Faculties will be enlarg'd to take in nought but Plagues and Torments ; which here fed on nothing but Vanity and *Leasing* : There thou wilt do nothing else but think on His Wrath on thy Self and Others, who here hadst no leisure or Heart to think on his Love and Goodness to thy Self and Others. Bethink thy self a little, while thou art in the World, summon up thy Considerative *Faculties*, set them all at work to ruminate on the unchangeable Estate wherein thou wilt either Praise or Blasphe-me the Name of God for ever : Hast thou a Soul given thee for no other Work but to compleat thine own Misery ? And doth God wait upon thee but until thou *sittest thy Self for destruction*, whiles thou art little thinking how soon it will come upon thee ? And then all the *vain Thoughts that lodge within thee*, will take their

flight from thee, and perish forever with thee ; *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider thy wayes.* And remember, 'tis the proper work of the *Rational Soul* (and of no other Creature but Angels) to reflect on it self, and wisely to project for its future Happiness. When God hath laid before thee all the Contrivances of his everlasting Councils and Love towards thee in *Jesus Christ* ; and *set Him forth to be a Propitiation thro' Faith in his Blood*, that thine Eyes and Heart may be astonished with Admiration of such Mercy: That this *White Flag* should hang up so long, and none consider the *Black One* of Judgment may appear in its stead ; when all hopes of Life are gone and departed for ever : This is an Evidence of a fatal Obduration , and a mighty Contempt of Divine Grace. See Sinner ! Mercy is yet offer'd ! *Proposals* of Peace are laid before thee ! Consider, thy Life and Soul are in hazard ; if thou art drawing lines with *Archimedes* in the *Dust*, while the City is stormed, and the Enemy entred, the next News will be the Sword in thy Bowels, and an everlasting *Adieu* to thy presumptuous Hopes.

But while *Isaac's* holy Heart was better exercised, and he was sweetly walking with his God in the Fields, his Eyes discover the *Camels* Coming. *In the doing thy Commandments there is great Reward* : Mercy overtakes him in the midst of *Duty*. In the very Moment that he is enjoying God, God gives him the Enjoyment of his *Rebekah*, to whom (for the Honour that she doth him in lighting off her *Camel*, and Veyling her self at the first Meeting) he pays so entire

tire Affection and constant Love, that in all his Life he never leaves her to depart into another Bed: And having now gotten so good a *Wife*, he endeavours to forget the loss of a *Mother*, and to remember his Sorrow no more.

I question not but the Readers Observation hath already prevented me, in the Noting of the clearest *Allegory* of the Proceedings of God in the raising a Seed to his Son, illustrated by the Care of *Abraham* in this Transactions of *Isaac's* Nuptials: 'Tis the Project and the Counsel of his Will to propose him as the Spiritual Husband to his *Church*. He makes the first Motion by his Servants that are sent forth to *Woe and Beseech*: They are sworn to Fidelity, under the dreadful penalties of destruction to themselves, if they be found Careless or Unfaithful in so great a Trust. *Their Blood will I require at thy Hand*. The Arguments they use, are the Promises of an Everlasting Inheritance, durable Riches and Honour in the heavenly *Canaan*: There is nothing required but bare Consent, and an hearty willingness to the Match. *What doth the Lord require of thee, &c. My Son give me thine Heart onely*. The Holy Spirit co-operates with the Messengers, and helps to convince and perswade. *Our Gospel came not in Word only, but in Power, and in the Holy Ghost*. He enlighthneth the mind to see what are the *Hopes of his Calling*, and how great the *Riches of the Inheritance*. He works the Heart to a free Consent; *Thy People shall be willing*; &c. When Faith is wrought, and Consent gotten, the Jewels are produced; *Gifts and Graces*: After
ye

ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit. Dispatch is urged ; *Be ye ready*, the Faithful Soul called to depart: *Hearken O Daughter, and consider, incline thine Ear, forget thine own People, and thy Fathers House.* While she is traveling on the Road of Life, the *Bridegroom* meets her ; *I will manifest my self unto her ;* she receives him covered with a Veyl, and blushing at the Thoughts of her unworthiness : But he likes her the better, and greatly delights in her *Beanty*, while she *Worships him as her Lord*, and passes in with him into the everlasting *Pavilion*, where she alone enjoys his Love, and entire Person for ever. *We shall be ever with the Lord : ---Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

The *Nuptials of Isaac* thus happily Celebrated, (and *Rebekah* in Possession of *Sarah's Tent*) what hath the joyful *Father* to expect more than an happy Translation to Heaven : But to hear of a *Marriage-Bed* instead of a *Grave*, and six flourishing Branches to spring out from the *Dead Stock* of his Body ; this is a little strange and surprizing. Let not my *Reader* profane himself by imputing Levity, much less Lasciviousness to Him that for so long a time had conversed with *Angels*, and God Himself on Earth : For as *Jesus* could not Bow his Sacred Head, nor give up the Ghost before each Syllable that was Prophesied of Him was perfectly fulfilled, even to the bitter Draught of *Vinegar* and *Gall* in his last Moments ; so neither could *Abraham* suffer a *Demise* e'er the Promises made to Him were as perfectly Accomplished : And by the
Power

Power of a Divine Revelation, (*I will make thee a Father of many Nations*;) he is Invigorated with Prolifick Vertue for blessing six Countries more with Princes from his own Body: Nor shall this Numerous Brood of *Keturah* be injurious to the Great Heir, the very *Offal* of the Estate shall suffice for Portions to Them, while *Isaac's* Dishes stand never the Thinner on his Table. Let the Men of this World run away with the poor Legacies of general Providence: *Heaven* is enough and enough for the true Heirs of God. Lord, however hardly thou deal with me here in the World, *Reserve* a Portion for me with thy Self, and it shall suffice.

The Glorious *Sun* is now upon *Setting*, and my Pencil must prepare to draw the *Shadows of the Night*, which are Doubled by the shutting up the Eyes of the Great *Abraham* in Death. Since *Eternity* was *Retail'd* into *Parcels of Time* and *Dayes*, never was there a *Century* better pass'd in Universal Obedience to the Glory of the God of Life, whose Divine Wisdom thinks it but just to send him a *Writ of Ease* from all his *Travels under the Sun*; and having finished the Work he had given him to do, to call for him Home, and to fix him in his Lodgings with Himself in the Unmoveable Kingdom.

Abraham is dead, and the *Prophets*: They have chalked out to us the *Path of Life*, and then retired to Heaven. With what Impudence can any Church tell me, That if I follow the *Steps of the Great Abraham*, believe and *Live* as He; yet shall I never Arrive to his Bosom, unless I seal to the Articles of their own devising, and believe

believe what *Abrahams* Holy Heart would have *Risen at*, and Abhorr'd to consent to? Should God send again this holy *Saint* from Heaven to walk a while among his Children on Earth, retaining still but his own *Principles*, and teaching them to others, as what were sufficient to bring them to Happiness, in a Zealous Rejection of all the vain Inventions of Men, imposed now on the *Christian* World, under the *Anathema's* of Death; confident I am, even *Abraham* would very hardly escape the Censures of the Cursed *Inquisition*, which *Wracks* the Faith of every Soul (within its Clutches) into larger Extensions of impossible things to be Credited, than the Tortured Joynts are drawn out to under the cruel *Twitches* of the Tyrannical Engine.

If Revelation of Divine *Truth*, imprinted on the Heart (fitted and softned to receive the *Impression* upon it,) and gaining upon the Affections to embrace and delight in it, working off the Life from unsuitable Practices, to reduce it into a *Natural* and pleasing Conformity to the Holy Rule, be not enough to secure me from the Dangers of Error and *Delusion*, wherewith the *Superstitious* World so uncharitably charges every Dissenter from its Follies, (so unreasonably imposed,) let me contentedly dye, and put it to the Tryal before the *Tribunal* of the Great Judge; who I am sure cannot deny his own Work, in Attempering an Heart to his Holy Knowledge and Obedience, that naturally is so Averse and Rebellious against both: And for *Appendices* to Religion, Policies of Government, and offensive Ceremonies, &c. I can easily

fly distinguish (in the Light of Truth) how far I am obliged to conform to them for the sake of Peace and Honour of the Church; and in the same Light to differ from them, where they dissent from the Truth, and grate too much upon Conscience; and yet still 'tis my Duty to pay Respect (so far as I can) to the Persons of Men: Tho' I know it mine Interest in no wise to bend to their Principles, or close in with them in Cringing to a false God; and this I learn from *Abraham*, whose Demeanour towards the Children of *Heth* was full of Condescension and Civil Respect, while he would have chosen to Dye, rather than given them the Honour of his Presence in their *Idolatrous Temples*. Civility and an Endearing Carriage hath its huge Advantages in the World, where Crabbedness and a Morose look is not only ungentle, but affrighting. If *Abraham* had been a Person of a Rugged Supercilious Deportment amongst Men, how dimly had his Light shined in the Diversity of Nations, where God directed him to go! how little had his Profession profited towards an embracing of the Truths he followed! I think it may be truly Remarked, That the Generous and obliging Spirits of some Gentlemen in the *Romish* Communion, have done more to allure the Minds of our unstable Neighbours, to harbour good Thoughts of their ill Religion, than all the designing Attempts of their Priests, whose Cloysters naturally breed them to a sort of Carriage that never fails to create Jealousies and Fears upon the Minds of Men that occur them; and bespeak them

them rather to stand upon their Guard against them, than to receive them in open Arms of Love: And while very few of that *Fraternity* can give a rational Account of at least *Two* parts in *Three* of their Faith, which they ever devolve upon the Church, (who takes care too that a prying Inspection be ever discouraged and *Brow-beaten*) it shall suffice me to walk in the lustre of *Abraham's* Religion, from whom the Reformed Churches have received the Pattern; and care not to follow any other: And for my Self, had I a thousand Souls to Answer for, I would adventure them all upon the pure and unspotted Profession of Him, who had all his Knowledge from God sanctified into an Excellent Life, which fitted him in the End for a Glorious Death, and a blessed Eternity.

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